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# Bishop Urges Deep Change

*HEATHER HAHN*  
*For the Arkansas United Methodist*

**HOT SPRINGS** — The first morning session of the 2010 Annual Conference opened with the gospel according to Bob—Bob Dylan, that is.

Before his Episcopal address, Bishop Charles Crutchfield showed a film of Dylan singing his famous anthem “The Times They Are A Changin’.” The song’s lyrics resonated with listeners in this age of Twitter as they did back in the age of “Flower Power.”

Throughout Annual Conference on June 6-9, the bishop and other church leaders challenged the roughly 1,200 United Methodists present to imagine how the church can best adapt to—and take a lead in—changing times. The theme this year was “Imagine: Transforming the World Together.”

“We share the wilderness experience of the Children of Israel,” Crutchfield said in his address. “The Church, the United Methodist Church and our Church in Arkansas

are in a land we know not, a culture that is rapidly changing, a world for which we in the church were not prepared to engage, nor for which most of us were trained.”

But the wilderness experience is necessary, he said, to reverse the denomination’s decades-long decline in membership and truly discern where God wants to lead the church.

Since last August, the bishop has worked with the Imagine Ministry Team, a group of clergy and laity, to examine how the Arkansas Conference does church. The process of rethinking how the conference and individual churches should carry out their mission is still in its early stages. The conference won’t take up any proposed formal changes until at least next year’s annual meeting.

In the mean time, Gil Rendle—a longtime church consultant who has been helping with the process—also stressed to Annual Conference members the importance of spending time in an uncertain wilderness.

“The wilderness is a difficult place to live. It’s uncomfortable. But the wilderness is also where God reforms God’s people,” said Rendle, an ordained United Methodist elder.

“The question is: What would the Israelites have been like if they’d had a bus service, taken the turnpike and arrived at the Promised Land in a week and half including rest stops? They would have arrived as unchanged people.”

The ancient Israelites needed their time in the wilderness to overcome their slave mentality, he said. Likewise, Christians throughout the northern hemisphere need time in the wilderness to rediscover the people God wants them to be.

Rendle said United Methodists need to move beyond efforts to just add members and start thinking about what needs to happen to make disciples.

“Disciples are people whose lives have been changed, and because their lives have been changed, their relationships at home, work and community also change,” he said.

“We have been called to change people’s lives.”

At Annual Conference, the bishop asked that representatives from every Arkansas United Methodist congregation turn in responses about what changes their churches suggest for the future.

But in examining how the Arkansas Conference might better carry out the gospel mission, the bishop and the Imagine Ministry Team don’t want to lose sight of the conference’s strengths.

So Annual Conference this year also included breakout sessions for people to discuss when the conference is at its best and the values that make the conference work well. “When we morph into something new, we’ll make sure these values will be there,” said Kurt Boggan, the Imagine Ministry team’s project manager and Northeast District superintendent.

About 120 groups of 10 participated in the breakout sessions.

Sue Howe, senior pastor of Faith  
[See BISHOP page 8A]

# Wilson was ‘heart of the church,’ says pastor

*HEATHER HAHN*  
*United Methodist News Service*

**HOT SPRINGS**—Few places were as meaningful to Lillian Wilson as Central United Methodist Church just outside Wynne.

She was baptized and married there. She made sure the communion elements were always prepared each month and recently started teaching Sunday school to help out while the church’s longtime teacher recovered from a stroke.

And on Sunday morning, June 6, the 80-year-old retired nurse was in the church to finish assembling disaster relief buckets and health kits for collection at the denomination’s Arkansas Annual Conference meeting, which started that night.

It was her last act of servanthood. She was found beaten to death in the church

sanctuary that afternoon.

Investigators with the sheriff’s office in Cross County were still searching June 8 for two suspects in Wilson’s death. Her pastor, Dixon Platt, said authorities believe the murder weapon was the cross the church kept on its communion table.

Platt went to check on Wilson when she didn’t show up for worship Sunday at nearby Ellis Chapel United Methodist Church. The congregation of about 20 alternates worship each Sunday between Ellis Chapel and Central Church.

The pastor discovered Wilson’s body about 12:30 p.m. June 6 beneath an overturned pew. Her purse and car were missing.

Wilson died doing what she loved to do, Platt said, and that was serving God.

“Lil—everyone called her Lil  
[See WILSON page 8A]



A United Methodist News Service file photo by Mary Anne Cruthirds

Church member Lillian Wilson, 80, was found beaten to death inside Central United Methodist Church near Wynne.

# Churches help four-legged friends

HEATHER HAHN

For the Arkansas United Methodist

Traveling down an isolated country road toward her mobile home, 75-year-old Katherine Furqueron can count on being eagerly greeted by a companion at the front door.

Dixie, a tall, floppy-eared pooch with big brown eyes, cannot wait to welcome Furqueron home, licking her hands and flopping down beside her on the rug next to the couch in the small, neatly decorated living room.

"She thinks I can't do any wrong," Furqueron said, patting Dixie on the head and rubbing the fur behind her ears. "She appreciates the things that you do for her."

Still, she acknowledges that taking care of her faithful companion, along with herself and an ailing son, on what she receives from Social Security can be a challenge.

That is where Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church in Little Rock, she said, has been a godsend—and a dog blessing. Once a month, church volunteers distribute bags of dog and cat food along with groceries for low-income families.

Quapaw Quarter is one of a growing number of United Methodist churches across the country discovering that one way to help the poor is to help their four-legged friends. Pet ministries not only set tails wagging, but also serve pressing human needs for companionship.

And spirituality, said Joe Hirsch, chair of the Hearts & Paws pet ministry at Christ United Methodist Church in Bethel Park, Pa.

"If you want to see the love of Christ, just look at a pet," Hirsch said. "The pet gives you unconditional love the same way Christ does. He doesn't care what color you are or how rich or how poor."

## All God's creatures

Denise Dorton, a member of Quapaw Quarter United Methodist Church, started the Little Rock ministry after watching images of people along the Gulf Coast frantically search for their pets in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina.

The news footage made her think about how much she loved her own two cats.

**"For a lot of older people, a dog or cat is the only companion they have."**

—William Swartz, 75

"I thought about how awful it would be for my kitties to be without food for maybe days or weeks," she said. "Somehow from that, God planted the idea that there are people here who love their animals, but have trouble providing even food for them."

To get the project off the ground, she raised money through a pet photo contest among pet owners from church. Congregants voted on the winners by making cash donations.

Since the ministry began in March 2006,



UMNS photos by Heather Hahn  
Katherine Furqueron pats her pooch, Dixie, in her home in Little Rock, Ark.

more than 450 households have signed up for pet food. Dorton estimates that she gives out about 75 bags of dog food, 35 bags of cat food and six to eight bags of puppy and kitten chow each month. She also distributes fliers about monthly free animal spay/neutering that a local pet rescue group offers for low-income pet owners.

People often line up to get their pet food before they even get in line to get their own food, Dorton said. Several of the clients are elderly.

## Wonderful friends

William Swartz, 75, cares for his fuzzy terrier-mix Angel, and a tail-less American bobtail cat named Tiger in the small, clapboard house. He resides in a once gang-ridden neighborhood in central Little Rock.

However, with his pets, his home is always tranquil.

"I think they're wonderful friends," he said. "When I'm sitting in my easy chair watching TV, Angel wants to sit beside me and Tiger on my lap, and they'll sniff each others' noses."

Swartz said he wishes more churches would offer pet food as part of their food pantries.

"For a lot of older people, a dog or cat is the only companion they have," Swartz said. "They don't want to go to a retirement home unless they can bring their pets."

## Ministry of caring

Christ United Methodist Church in Pennsylvania goes well beyond simply providing food. The ministry includes a monthly memorial prayer service for those who have lost their pets as well as emergency care when a pet owner needs to go to the hospital.

The church also plays host to an annual pet fair where people can adopt rescue animals and learn more about caring for animals. The church's seventh annual Pet Care Fair will be on June 26.

The ministry has attracted many who are unchurched or spiritual seekers, Hirsch said.

"We are myth busters in some ways," he said. "People think if we care this much about pets, how much more do you care about me?"

\*Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.

# Being in the Wilderness

DEENA MARIE HAMILTON  
Special contributor



Deena Marie Hamilton

I was getting kind of restless one night, so I decided to hang out with my "brother from another mother," Conrad. I like hanging out with him because he has all these cool little philosophical tidbits that I always learn from and end up putting in some of my sermons. When I need inspiration of any kind, he's pretty much my go-to guy.

He was helping me do some research for the next book that I'm writing. What I don't like is the Ward Cleaver lecture that goes along with the help that he gives me. He's 50-years-old, so of course, he feels that he needs impart that Bill Harvin wisdom to me, which I entertain because I loved his dad tremendously, and he's no longer with us.

We both went to the same college, but our experiences were different. He's white and I'm black. One day he went to one of his professors, who was white, yearning to get a better understanding of being a white student on a black college campus.

The professor told Conrad that being at Philander is the wilderness. He wasn't being mean about it or racist. He and his professor talked about how being in the wilderness was like being separated from a world in which you are comfortable.

If that's the case, then my daughter, who is black and a student at Philander is in the wilderness, too, because she's separated from all the comforts of home and my constant supervision. She has to use what I have taught her to make it on her own. In the wilderness, she will develop a unique relationship with God based on her own experiences. I could worry because my daughter can be dim-witted, but I was so

much like her at that age.

When I was in the wilderness, I developed a personal relationship with God that was like no other. Being separated from what you know can be challenging in the beginning but eventually we'll find peace through adaptation.

It seems that many of patriarchs of the Bible experienced a wilderness moment in their lives. Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, the children of Israel, Elijah, David, John the Baptist, and Paul all went through the wilderness. This is an experience from which no one was exempt, not even our Savior.

In the fourth chapter of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus is in the wilderness and being tempted by the enemy. Each and every time he is confronted, he does something that we should always do when we're in the "wilderness." He used the word of God for supplication and survival.

Whether it is four days or forty days, it really doesn't matter. What's important is that when we are in the wilderness, whether its in a situation or in our minds, we have God's words to guide us.

If those words can get Jesus through his wilderness, then it's good enough for us. I know some might say that is far-fetched, but we have nothing to lose in doing this and everything to gain. So, when you're in the wilderness of confusion, despair, hopelessness, hunger, or worthlessness, think about this: What would Jesus say?

Deena Marie Hamilton is the senior pastor of McCabe Chapel United Methodist Church in North Little Rock. She can be reached at [rev.deenamarie@gmail.com](mailto:rev.deenamarie@gmail.com).



Volume 157 • No. 9 July 2, 2010  
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The Arkansas United Methodist is the newspaper of record for the Arkansas Conference of The United Methodist Church. It is published once monthly, on the first Fridays of each month, and four special issues throughout during the year for a total of 16 issues per year.

**Send Correspondence & Change of Address to:**  
Arkansas United Methodist, 800 Daisy Bates Dr., Little Rock, AR 72202; or e-mailed to Patrick Shownes at [pshownes@arumc.org](mailto:pshownes@arumc.org)

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to:  
The United Methodist Reporter, PO Box 660275, Dallas, TX 75266-0275.

The United Methodist Reporter (USPS 954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications, 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, TX 75247. Periodicals Postage Paid at Dallas.



Arkansas Conference Communications  
800 Daisy Bates Drive  
Little Rock, AR 72202-3770  
[www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org) (501) 324-8000

## Subscriptions

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- \$25.00, 2 Years  
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## Submission Deadlines

Issue Date	Submission Deadline
July 2, 2010	June 16, 2010
Aug. 6, 2010	July 21, 2010
Sept. 3, 2010	Aug. 18, 2010



# Making Sense Out of the Senseless



DR. WILLIAM O. (BUD) REEVES  
Special Contributor

When I was a kid, my family used to camp at the Albert Pike recreation area. We took our kids there when they were young. So I felt a connection when a flash flood ripped through the campground June 11 and killed 20 people. Later I felt a more intense connection when I found out that a dear friend's granddaughter, Gayble Moss, age 7, was one of the victims.



**Bud Reeves**

The same day the papers screamed headlines about the flood, there was an article about the tragedy we had heard about at Annual Conference. Lillian Wilson, a dedicated servant of the Central United Methodist Church in Hamlin, was murdered in the sanctuary of the church. While gathering relief supplies to deliver to conference, she was beaten to death with the cross from the church's altar. It doesn't get any

more evil than that.

When we confront these horrible and senseless tragedies, our natural response is to ask the unanswerable questions. Why them? Why now? Where was God? Can't God stop this innocent suffering?

There are no satisfying answers to these questions, as often as we ask them. The pastor at Gayble's funeral suggested we focus on what we know, rather than what we do not know. Wise words. To focus on what we do not know and cannot understand only leads to anger and bitterness.

What we do know is the nature of God. God is pure love and compassion. Jeremiah said, "He will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone." It is a comfort to know that the first heart to break when the flood arose and when Lillian Wilson was attacked was the great divine heart of God.

I heard the Albert Pike flood described on television as an "act of God." The God I worship does not act that way. In his divine wisdom, he has limited his sovereignty to

allow freedom in the natural and human realm. Only in freedom can we be fully human—to love, to believe, and to be in relationship with our Creator. Natural and human freedom sometimes turn tragic, and when they do, it is God who stands in the gap—to comfort, strengthen, and heal. It's his nature.

The second thing we know is that the physical world is temporary. Paul writes, "What can be seen is temporary, but what cannot be seen is eternal." Lillian Wilson was blessed with a long life; Gayble Moss with only seven short years. Both were blessings to those who knew them. It is no small thing to believe that their lives did not end when their physical lives were cut short. They had a home prepared for them. Despite the pain of their loss for those who were left in the temporary world, for them it is all good.

The last thing we know—the last thing we need to know—is the powerful reality of grace. It is captured in the immortal words of Romans 8:28: "We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love

him, who have been called according to his purpose." (NIV) This is the way God has dealt with human tragedy from the beginning—the Garden of Eden, the Hebrew captivity, the Babylonian exile, the crucifixion of Jesus, the Holocaust, 9/11, and too many others. Not all things are good; some are horrible and senseless. But out of the worst that human sinners and a broken creation can do, God can bring good.

God's goodness is not mathematical—what can equal the life of a child? But it is miraculous, that anything good can come out of some of the tragedies we experience. More love, more faith, the healing of a broken heart, a new beginning on the rubble of shattered hopes and dreams—that's where God works best.

For the families whose lives were devastated by the Albert Pike flood and the murder in the sanctuary, things will not be OK for a long time. But slowly healing can happen. Things will never be the same again, but they can be good again. That is an amazing gift of grace and a real act of God

## Five to Represent Arkansas at Global Convocation

JESSICA SZENHER  
Special Contributor

Five Arkansas United Methodists have leadership roles at the Second Global Young People's Convocation and Legislative Assembly in Berlin, Germany this month.

Global Convocation gathers young people from all over the world to come together and connect with each other. The vision for this global meeting is young people sharing their life experiences, struggles, gifts and realities, so that their stories transform the world. It attempts to bridge the social, economical, religious, ethnic and political gaps and differences that often separate and divide. The Legislative Assembly at the Global Young People's Convocation is designed to give young people a voice in the church through the legislative process. United Methodist young people from throughout the world have the opportunity to submit legislative proposals to the Legislative Assembly, and 144 young people and adults who are sent as voting delegates discuss, debate, and discern direction for moving proposals forward to the United Methodist General Conference in 2012.

Three of the 12 delegates from the South Central Jurisdiction are Arkansans: youth delegate Judd Burns, a high school senior from Beebe United Methodist Church; young adult delegate Katy Dunn, a recent graduate of Southern Methodist University and a member of Pulaski Heights United Methodist Church in Little Rock; and adult worker delegate Brandon Bates, youth minister at Lakewood United Methodist Church in North Little Rock.

"I believe attending this convocation will be a rewarding experience, both culturally and religiously," said Burns. "Not only will we delegates be taking a stand on issues of the church and deciding how we feel is best to go about resolving them, but we will also be sharing our ways of life and worship. I believe this weeklong 'global melting pot' will help me grow in my faith, and bridge connections the world over."

Bates is looking forward to the coming together of youth, young adults, and youth workers from different corners of the globe in the hopes of helping reignite a movement in the Church. He expects to share hopes, dreams, joys and concerns while worshipping and Christian conferencing together.

Approximately half of the world's population is under the age of 25, yet these are the voices that aren't being heard, according to Bates. "The conference is important in helping the younger voices that are often unheard from, or ignored, to have a more unifying voice in the ministry and direction of the Church," he said. "It allows for ideas to come forth, be discussed, processed, and help to transform our world. Hopefully we will have more of the voices from the GYPC heard at General Conference next time." The 2012 General Conference is scheduled for April 24–May 4 in Tampa, Fla.

Serving behind the scenes at the GYPC are Will Green and Jay Clark. Green, a recent Hendrix graduate from Hope First United Methodist Church and one of the co-chairs of the Division on Ministries with Young People (a Division of the General Board of Discipleship) will be chairing the event's legislative assembly. Jay Clark, Minister with Youth at Pulaski

Heights UMC, also serves on the Division on Ministries with Young People and on the Global Young People's Convocation Program Committee. He will be leading a workshop in Berlin.

Both Bates and Clark attended the first GYPC in 2006 in Johannesburg, South Africa. They characterized it as an amazing experience. Clark said there were overwhelming challenges at the global conference, like the language barrier, but it was interesting to see where other people were in their faith.

"The worship was great, especially the parts led by the Africa University Choir, and

we had a special worship service to bring in the New Year at midnight, which was cool," Bates said. "I learned that throughout the world, we are a lot more similar than I thought."

"The excitement comes from the connection of the global church," Clark said. "Our great Arkansas Conference events connect us as a state and Jurisdictional Youth Ministry Organization connects us regionally. But this big event every four years connects young Methodists from throughout the world. In a time when denominational loyalty is not strong, it is good to celebrate who we are."

### PEOPLE OF FAITH



Members of the Youth Knitting Group at First United Methodist Church in Conway took time on June 2 to bless a prayer shawl they made and gave at Annual Conference. Pictured are: (clockwise, from bottom left) Natalie Clark, adult leader Amy Blaylock, Sara Hales and Kristen Farris. Fellow knitting group member and adult leader Shirley Bowen joined them via cell phone.

Photo courtesy of Conway FUMC

# Risking system change could reap big rewards

ERIC VAN METER  
Special Contributor

There are dumb ideas, and then dumb ideas.

Daydreaming about catching up to a beam of light on a bicycle is a dumb idea. Unless, of course, you're Albert Einstein, and that silly daydream leads you to completely revise our understanding of the physical universe.

Sometimes dumb ideas are just dumb. But sometimes the willingness to entertain a thought that most would consider ridiculous can lead to seismic change for the better.

Here are two dumb ideas to ponder, one a premise and the other a proposal.

The premise is that, by engaging in real dialogue, our annual conference could find a new practice of itinerancy that leads to deeper, more authentic ministry on the part of both our pastors and our churches.

Simple enough, right?

Not so much. At least not in my experience.

Some people I talk to cannot see any problem with our system of arbitrary itinerancy. Some tell

me how much better it is now than "in the old days," when no one knew the appointments until they were read at Conference. Still others blast away at any notion of changing itinerancy, certain that we'll end up with a call system like the Baptists (who, to hear us talk, must have a frightening polity indeed).

The truth is, however, that those are reactions to an irrelevant subject. The question is not how we stack up against our past, nor how we compare to another denomination. The question isn't even whether we want an itinerant or a call system, since those are far from the only two options. The real question, to me, is how we can begin to deploy clergy in a way that serves us, and not vice versa.

I work from the premise that real change in our practice of arbitrary itinerancy has the potential to produce real change in the culture of the Arkansas Annual Conference. Perhaps that's a dumb



Eric Van Meter

idea.

But what if it's not? What if an exploration of a new method really could stabilize and ultimately strengthen our ability to do ministry together? I think that would be worth having some real conversations about.

Which brings me to my second dumb idea of the day: a proposal for what the change may look like.

Let's start looking at appointments based not on year-to-year needs, but on four-year periods. If the normal appointment cycle is four years rather than twelve months, the perpetual anxiety and indecision that plagues so many of our ministry settings might decrease. The less room we have to allow for anxiety, the more we can allot for creative thinking and action.

But what if there's a bad match between a pastor and her congregation? Do they have to endure each other for four years? Possibly, but not necessarily. I'd suggest giving both pastors and congregations one "No Questions

Asked" (NQA) card every decade. At any time, one or the other could use that card to initiate a move, no questions asked.

However, if pastor or congregations wants to initiate a move after using their NQA card, they would face a penalty. Pastors would forfeit moving expenses from the annual conference. Congregations would have to pay an additional apportionment fee, which would be directed toward young adult ministry and new church starts.

Why suggest a financial penalty? Because it sometimes takes that to get our attention. My hunch is that, with money on the line, clergy and congregations alike might find working through their differences together a much more appealing choice.

The results of implementing this dumb idea are uncertain. But I do think it could help stabilize our ministry settings and calm our reactionary tendencies. I know it would make Arkansas a more attractive place for young clergy to

be.

But is this even possible? I believe it is. We would not have to re-write or ignore anything in the *Discipline*, since we would still be working with practices that fit within our current polity. We would only need to refine the ideas, see what emerges, and be ready to scrap the whole thing as soon as it stops being useful.

The bigger question is whether we as an annual conference have the will to insist on such an exploration. Do we have enough tolerance for failure that we're willing to take on risk? Do we have enough patience with one another to have frustrating conversations? Do we have the courage to think with imagination rather than fear?

While we're at it, do we have even more dumb (or dumber) ideas to put forth? It might be worth considering. You just never know when you're going to catch that beam of light.

Eric Van Meter is the director of the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas

## Assembly Time!

HEATHER HAHN  
For the Arkansas United Methodist

Arkansas United Methodist teens will gather to build friendships and celebrate their Christian faith in July.

The Junior High Assembly will be July 11-14 at Hendrix College, 1600 Washington Ave. in Conway.

The Senior High Assembly will follow immediately July 14-17 also at Hendrix College.

The junior high event is for all youth in the sixth- through eighth-grades in the 2008-2009 school year. Its mission is to minister to youth of all backgrounds and make the message of Jesus Christ relevant in today's culture.

The worship leaders will be Andrea Allen, newly appointed associate minister at Lakewood United Methodist Church in North Little Rock, and musician Kyle Cantrell, a native of Ada, Okla. Cantrell is the full-time worship pastor at Journey Church in Norman, Okla., where he leads worship for 4,000 people each week.

The senior high event takes its theme "The Simple Life" from The Three General Rules of John Wesley: Do good; Do no harm; and stay in

love with God.

The speaker will be Omar al-Rikabi, campus minister and executive director of the Wesley Foundation at the University of Arkansas at Fayetteville. Al-Rikabi is Texas native, born to a United Methodist mother from the United States and a Muslim father from Iraq. A lifelong United Methodist, he was baptized at First UMC in Carrollton, Texas, and holds a Master of Divinity degree from Asbury Theological Seminary. He is a writer and storyteller, and his work can be read at [www.firstbornstories.com](http://www.firstbornstories.com).

Cantrell also will lead music at the senior high event.

The Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries sponsors both gatherings. Organizers ask participants in both events to bring their Bibles, items for a talent show, money for Youth Service Fund activities as well as an open heart and a great attitude.

After July 1, late registration is \$175 for the junior high event, and there is no guarantee you will get a T-shirt. Registration for the senior high event is \$155.

To register, visit [www.arumc.org/register](http://www.arumc.org/register).

### Worship Fair 2010

August 13-14

"Making the Ordinary Extraordinary"

St. Paul  
United Methodist Church  
2223 Durwood Road  
Little Rock, AR 72207

#### CLINICIANS

**John Thornburg**—Preacher, song leader, and worship consultant; head of "A Ministry of Congregational Singing;" from Dallas, Texas  
**Anna Laura Page**—Composer, musician, clinician, handbell music editor; from Sherman, Texas  
**Gail Wells**—Stained glass artist from St. Paul United Methodist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas  
**Liz Wright**—Children's leader from St. Paul United Methodist Church, Little Rock Arkansas

#### SCHEDULE:

##### Friday, August 13

6:00 p.m.—Registration

7:00 p.m.—"Singing the Church's Song Across the Centuries, Across the Styles, Across the Globe" with John Thornburg (free and open to the public; a freewill offering will be taken)

#### RECEPTION TO FOLLOW

##### Saturday, August 14

8:30 a.m.—Registration

9:00 a.m.—Opening Worship (John Thornburg preaching)

9:45 a.m.—Break

10:00-11:30 a.m.—Class Session I

Thornburg—"Beyond Filling in the Blanks: Restoring Joy to Worship Planning" (Part One)

Page—Reading Session (including Children's Choir Festival Anthems)

Wells—Introduction to Stained Glass

Wright—Children's Activities for 3rd-6th grades (Handchimes, storytelling, games)

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.—Business meeting, lunch and browsing

12:30-2:00 p.m.—Class Session II

Thornburg—"Beyond Filling in the Blanks: Restoring Joy to Worship Planning" (Part Two)

Page—Keyboard Reading Session

Wells—Introduction to Stained Glass

(repeat of morning class)  
Wright—Children's Activities for 3rd-6th Grades (arts and crafts, worship preparation)

2:00-2:45 p.m.—Closing worship with Communion

2:45 p.m.—Browsing

(exhibits close at 3:30 p.m.)

Exhibits include Cokesbury Bookstore and Saied Music

#### REGISTRATION — "Making the Ordinary Extraordinary" (Worship Fair 2010)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Church \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_

#### Fees for Fellowship Members:

\_\_\_ \$40 on or before June 15

\_\_\_ \$45 after June 15 & on or before July 15

\_\_\_ \$60 after July 15

#### Fees for Non-members:

\_\_\_ \$45 on or before June 15

\_\_\_ \$50 after June 15 & on or before July 15

\_\_\_ \$65 after July 15

#### Other fees:

\_\_\_ \$10 for reading session music packet

\_\_\_ \$10 per child for all Saturday activities

\_\_\_ I am applying for .5 CEU (available only to those who attend the entire event)

Make checks payable to "Arkansas Chapter, The Fellowship" and mail to:  
**Carol S. Goddard, 27 DeSoto Circle,  
North Little Rock, AR 72116**

Sponsored by the Arkansas Chapter, Fellowship of United Methodist in Music & Worship Arts and the Arkansas Conference

For more information contact Robert Armstrong at [rca1950@swbell.net](mailto:rca1950@swbell.net)  
For event updates, go to [www.arkansasfumwa.org](http://www.arkansasfumwa.org)



## EPISCOPAL ADDRESS 2010

I want to share with you a grainy, gritty image of the past. The Times, They Are A' Changing—Bob Dylan singing.

As a child of the 60's I listened to the nasal twang, the harmonica and guitar of Bob Dylan, and I've always liked this song. It fit the spirit of the age, and unlike many of the songs and ballads and words of protest and prophesy out of the 60's, it is still relevant. We are in rapidly changing times. The old verities shift. It is a different world. To say it is a new and dangerous world is to state the obvious.

As we focus on the theme of "Imagine Ministry," there is a metaphor/Biblical Text that serves as a background for the Episcopal Address today. You know it well. It is the story of Moses leading the children of Israel into the desert across the Red Sea and into the Wilderness of Sinai. They were in the wilderness for a long, long time. On more than one occasion they would murmur and complain that Moses led them into the wilderness to die. They would prefer slavery in Egypt to the unknown and uncomfortable world of the wilderness. They would prefer the "fleshpots" of Egypt and the bread of Egyptian ovens to the uncertainty of manna from an unknown source.

Like the old story of the lion who escaped from the local zoo, only to be found pacing back and forth in front of a five foot fence, a fence it could have easily jumped. So, also the children of Israel. The lion was programmed into its patterns of behavior from the past. To pass through the wilderness, the Israelites would have to change their perspective and way of thinking and acting. It would call for more than a corporate change—it would require deep personal transformation.

We share the wilderness experience of the Children of Israel. The Church, the United Methodist Church and our Church in Arkansas are in a land we know not, a culture that is rapidly changing, a world for which we in the church were not prepared to engage, nor for which most of us were trained. Our patterns of behavior no longer resonate.

This wilderness experience is a time of great change. While the Gospel truths to which we strongly hold are the same yesterday, today and tomorrow, the way in which we communicate the Gospel, the ways in which we live out the gospel, the manner of personalizing our own gospel experience must change or it will fall on deaf ears. The ways in which we "do" church,



Bishop Charles Crutchfield delivers the episcopal address on the first morning of annual conference.

"are" church—the ways in which we articulate the Gospel must learn from our new and strange environment. Like God's challenge to Moses and the Israelites to choose life or death, we will either choose life giving deep change or we will experience slow death. Someone has said that for the kind of deep change we envision, we need the "courage to walk naked into a land of uncertainty." Where we find ourselves in this story is not so much about the way out of the wilderness, but about how we pay attention to the landscape of the wilderness and how we are reformed and renewed by what we encounter.

In late 2008 and early 2009, discussion began to pop up across the annual conference about our future and how to face it. All the discussions, though varied in both depth and detail, acknowledged that we need to experience a transformation in the way we do church in Arkansas. We can no longer do as we have done in the past if we are to reverse the decline of vitality and the loss of energy and passion in our church. Our purpose, "To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," will become a laudable, but laughable tag line if we do not experience deep change in the life of our conference.

The Imagine Ministry Team was formed, but not to fix all our problems or tell us how to do solutions. Rather we have secured

an insightful consultant. (You will hear from Gil Rendle later today.) We have been intent on gathering information, raising questions and creating the context for conversation that recognizes that God is doing a new thing in our midst, something dramatic is happening—as it did at Sinai; and we now need to decide how we will respond. As we move forward, the change of which I speak is not about rearranging the office chairs in the conference office or reducing the shared ministry giving. On our journey I suspect the

**'The first step into the future is to look at the hard facts of the present and the past.'**

**—Bishop Crutchfield**

conference will deal with structural and financial issues, but the real issue before us is not structure, and it is certainly not money. The issues are much more profound and fundamental. It is how we will view and deal with the wilderness/world in which we live and through which we are moving. It is how we confront our fears and hopes and opportunities. It is about our attitudes, our understanding of who we are—clergy and laity. Will we

be bound by the past or use it as a spring board into the future. Will we pace back and forth in front of a fence or will we jump over it into a new life. It is about personal and corporate deep change that is both risky and transforming.

Through four regional meetings involving over 1600 clergy and laity the Imagine Ministry Team has invited all the local churches of our conference into a conversation and a time of discernment and discussion. We have shared data, some of which is very stark and not very pleasant. The first step into the future is to look at the hard facts of the present and the past. The second step is to let go of the past in order to embrace a positive future. To that end, we have commissioned a staff and structure assessment to analyze what we are doing now. Local churches have been invited into the conversation around three critical questions the results of which you will return today. In a few minutes Susan Ledbetter will invite you into a conversation about the central values and strengths of our conference in an annual conference-wide discernment process.

It is interesting that as we have moved through this year, as we have held the regional meetings, as we have had local churches doing their homework, we have heard the voices of both hope and fear, of cynicism and expectation. Others have simply refused to join the conversation. Groups have

coalesced, conversations have transpired. Some say, "Go for it." While others say, "Cut the budget and go back to business as usual. It is exactly what you would expect to hear in the wilderness. In essence, there are folks who are saying, "Let us go back to Egypt, at least we will die in comfort." While others say, "Let us take the risk, ask the hard questions about who we are and who we can yet become, let us go up and take the promised land. We are able!"

What really excites me in all this, are the signs of hope. Churches have written to me with excitement about the conversations in their administrative councils. Individuals have spoken of hope restored. One young pastor wrote: *I really thought the Imagine Ministry meeting would be one more silly waste of money and an institutional "hoop" to have to go attend and jump through. I thought it was ridiculous that you required us to be there; but, I stand corrected. I just wanted to say that I thought the presentation was very well done. I was thoroughly intrigued by it...I am very impressed by the conversation that you have started.... It seems there is an inherent skepticism in my mind for authority unless that particular authority is proven to be worth respecting. I suppose my generation has just seen such a break down in "authorities" in our lifetime and in history that we are scared to blindly put our trust*

[See ADDRESS page 6A]



# EPISCOPAL ADDRESS

*Continued from page 5A*

*in someone or something...I smiled when I left the meeting last Sunday.* I am excited not so much by the kind words, but by the underlying hope that we can, and indeed, must cross all the artificial boundaries that separate us if we are to navigate the wilderness.

And new forms of ministry are beginning to bloom. For example, we are just beginning to utilize a new style of ministry in special situations—*Transitional Intentional Interim Ministry*. Mt. View Church had been served long and well for 18 years by Rev. Steve Johnson. The church was not in crisis. He was to be appointed to First United Methodist Church, Hope, Arkansas at the first of the year. It would be an opportunity for the cabinet to facilitate a transitional intentional ministry that would bring a pastor, Dr. Ed Matthews, with specialized training to a church for a designated period of time as the congregation made the challenging transition from an 18 year pastorate to a new pastor. It would be an opportunity to work through the grief and to re-examine who and what the church was all about. Listen for a few moments as Missy Irvin speaks of

their experience.

The wilderness is not a stable place. It is filled with all kinds of questions, some already asked, others yet to be articulated. But if we are to cope with it and continue the journey through it, deep change will be required of us.

What excites me is that there is a very real and palpable movement toward the realization that deep change is possible. For me, and this is very personal, I think this involves finding our value before God and in the Kingdom of God as related not to size of congregation or building, or salary, or conference position, but in the satisfaction that we are part of a team that is bringing people to Christ. It is not about my status, it is about our effectiveness. It is about leaving the comfortable fleshpots of Egypt and our self-absorbed attitudes behind. Frankly, some will resist. Others will wait for someone to tell them what to do, then complain they don't want to do it. There will be the cynics and nay-sayers. There will be those who are in deep denial about the need for any change. But we are realizing that there is no silver bullet that will immediately fix all our problems, whatever the problems are. There is

a dawning realization that we need to forget about what we know and discover what we need.

There is an awakening that the most important issue before us is not the cost of the pension program and our health insurance, but whether or not we will once again become a movement through which the breath of the Holy Spirit will blow.

We are beginning to understand that we can reinvent ourselves, and transform our church and rise to the future God is offering.

The Arkansas Annual Conference has advantages. We have a high percentage of full member clergy under the age of 35. We are the envy of conferences all across the church because of the "Connected In Christ" process. We are blessed with an effective training process for new church development pastors. But most importantly, we have clergy and laity that refuse to be part of a dying church.

The hard work is just beginning. But this is our time. We were born for this hour, for this day, for this week, for this year. God has given into our hands the gift of a precious opportunity. The choice is ours. God said, "I place before you life and death." We can stay as we are and



Gil Rendle, an ordained United Methodist elder, tells the Annual Conference on Monday afternoon about the Imagine Ministry process. Rendle, a longtime church consultant, as been advising Bishop Charles Crutchfield's Imagine Ministry team since last August.

slowly die. We can embrace the risk of deep change and live.

Choose life.

## Youth experience of Annual Conference mostly positive

JESSICA SZENHER  
Special Contributor

Like Mark Norman in his opening prayer at Wednesday morning's session, the youth representatives of the Arkansas Annual Conference are choosing frontier, not fortress. Their fresh eyes for the annual meeting saw the experience with excitement and curiosity.

Youth delegate Alan Miller, 17, of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Maumelle was excited even before the meeting began. "I am still excited," he said after two days of meetings. "The worship service Monday night was my favorite. I liked the music and the sermon. Bishop Ntambo talked about how he wants us to bring about big change to get rid of poverty and oppression."

The energy and music at Monday night's worship service were the favorite part of the Annual Conference for several youth, including Natalie Clark, 17, of Conway First United Methodist Church. But her friend Emily Morton, 18, of Beebe First United Methodist Church liked the

traditional service on Sunday night best. "I can't get into the loud, crazy praise band. I like it to be more serious."

Michael Hughley, 14, of Haven United Methodist Church in Hot Springs is a preacher's kid. He likes the energy of the Conference and is happy to see what really happens rather than just hearing about it from his dad, Clyde Hughley.

"It is great to experience it myself," he said. "I like to listen to what is being said. At the Clergy Meeting this afternoon they kept talking about youth. It was good to hear what they are doing for us."

The proceedings were a little boring to Jameson Hall, 15, of Pioneer Memorial United Methodist Church, but he enjoyed hearing about his church and learning more about the issues. "I was volunteered to do this and didn't know what I was getting into," he said. "But it was cool."

Sara Tenison, 18, of Sequoyah United Methodist Church is attending her first Annual Conference. "The way the meetings are held is different than I expected. I didn't know how they'd hear the ideas of so many people. I



Youth members of the Annual Conference listen to presentations on Monday (June 7) of the gathering of United Methodists from across the state.

like the microphones and the way they listen."

Also from Sequoyah UMC is Henry Darnell, 15, who described himself as "lighted up about mission" after going to Ozark Mission Project in the summer of 2009. "I am a voting delegate and I've been taking a look at the resolutions. The only one I've decided about so far is about homosexuals being denied membership. I don't think they should have rights taken away

because of their sexual orientation; so I'm going to vote for referring this back to the Judicial Council."

Katy Baldrige of Goddard United Methodist Church and Aaron Lensing of Greenwood United Methodist Church are both involved in the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas Tech University in Russellville. They served communion at the opening worship service, the first time either of them had had the privilege of helping with the sacrament.

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"When I said, 'This is the blood of Christ, shed for you' it was definitely a special experience. You could feel the atmosphere," said Baldrige.

Mary French Wynne, 14, helped create a banner for her church, First United Methodist Church in Fordyce. Emily Coates, 13, was bearer for the banner at the Sunday evening worship service "It is important for people to know my church is a part of the Conference," Coates said.

Taylor Skinner, 17, of Clarendon United Methodist Church made the official report to Annual Conference as the Vice President of the Arkansas Conference Council on Youth Ministries. She reviewed the six youth Conference-wide events managed by the council and said the Youth Service Fund which raised \$7,000 in grants this year.

"I live in a small town, and I don't have a big youth group at my church," said Skinner. "Conference youth events are who I am and what keeps me going on my path to Jesus. I encourage all churches to get involved with District and Conference events."





Photos by Heather Hahn

ABOVE: Bishop Nkulu Ntamba of the North Katanga Annual Conference in the Democratic Republic of Congo addresses those gathered at a reception for United Methodists who've given to the Arkansas Conference's Congo Initiative. standing beside the bishop is Bibi Mwamba, one of two recent graduates of Philander Smith College who came on scholarship from Congo. LEFT: Karen Crutchfield presents a check for Congo water wells to the Ntambos on behalf of clergy spouses in the Arkansas Conference.

## Congolese Bishop's goal: 100 wells in 100 villages

HEATHER HAHN  
For the Arkansas United Methodist

Bishop Nkulu Ntamba Ntambo grew up pagan in what is now the Democratic Republic of Congo. At his father's bidding he used to periodically sacrifice large chickens to two household idols. His grandfather, he said, was a "witch doctor."

"You can see how far we were from Christianity," he said.

The Methodist education he received in high school, he said, was what transformed his faith—and his life.

He began regularly attending church services, joined a Christian youth group and read the works of Martin Luther King Jr., who introduced him to Jesus' command to "love your enemies."

In a country long torn by war—first against Belgian colonizers and then among local tribes—the idea of loving one's enemy was a revelation.

"I gave my life over to Christ," Ntambo said. "I asked God to let me become a pastor so I could preach the Word of God to my people. This is how I became who I am."

Today, Ntambo, 62, is bishop of Congo's rapidly growing North Katanga Annual Conference and a widely respected senator in Congo. He is also a peacemaker, who was recently recognized by the Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding for his role in ending hostilities between a rebel militia and the Congolese

government.

Ntambo was the guest preacher at this year's Annual Conference in Hot Springs. He came, in part, to share his gratitude for the aid the Arkansas Conference to Congo's development and to discuss his home community's still critical needs.

Bishop Charles Crutchfield described Ntambo and his wife "Mama Bishop" Nshimba Nkulu as "an enormous force for good in the lives of the United Methodist Church and in the building of the Kingdom of God."

In the 50 years since Congo

**'We all are human beings, and if we are touched by kindness, it can change your heart.'**

—Bishop Ntambo

gained its independence from Belgium, the number of United Methodists in the country has grown from some 60,000 to more than 500,000 members. Ntambo expects North Katanga's membership to triple in this quadrennium.

United Methodist conferences throughout Africa report similar growth at a time when most U.S. conferences, including Arkansas, are struggling to reverse of longtime trend of declining church

membership and attendance.

Ntambo attributes the growth in part to ministerial outreach and active youth ministries. Daily, he said, church members have activities in town or at the church to reach people.

Another contributor to growth, he said, is the church's charitable outreach. The church provides comfort to the grieving, food to the hungry and ministry for those in prison.

"We all are human beings, and if we are touched by kindness, it can change your heart," he said.

The global United Methodist Church also is taking a lead role in helping to develop Congo, including providing education, clinics, agricultural assistance and even bridges. The benefits of these advances in infrastructure aren't limited to just United Methodists.

The Arkansas Conference has been a partner in that development.

Since 2006, the Arkansas Conference has provided Bibles, bicycles and support to dig 26 water wells. The wells now cost \$8,000 each.

At Annual Conference, Arkansas United Methodists presented the bishop with \$35,000, enough for four more wells. At the gathering, Ntambo shared his goal that 100 wells would be constructed in 100 villages in North Katanga within two years.

"Water is life," Ntambo said in an interview. "With all the rain we have, we have no clean water. ... We have a lot of children and adults

who die of cholera or typhoid."

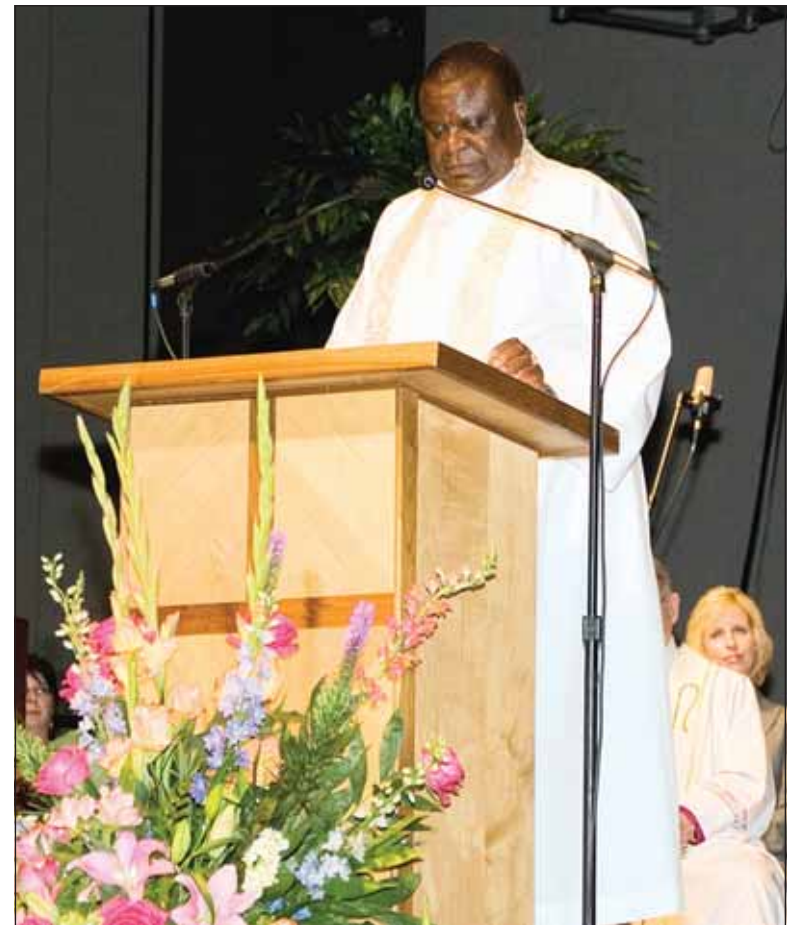
Since the construction of water wells in various communities, Ntambo said fewer people are dying. Also, more girls are going to school rather than traveling to collect water far from home.

"The water wells provided by Arkansas I can say are saving the life

of millions of people," he said. "They bring hope. They bring a clean body as well as a clean spirit."

To learn ways to help the North Katanga Annual Conference, visit [www.northkatangauc.org/](http://www.northkatangauc.org/).

Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.



Bishop Nkulu Ntamba of the Democratic Republic of Congo prepares to deliver his sermon at the opening worship service of the Arkansas Annual Conference.



# Wilson was 'heart of the church'

*Continued from front page*

— was the heart of the church," he said. "Lil just very quietly, very unassumingly lived out her Christian faith and encouraged others to do the same."

In a church of mostly retirees, Wilson did almost every kind of ministry at some point. In addition to teaching Sunday school, she was the church treasurer and its staff-parish committee chair.

"Her church was everything to her," said Mary Anne Cruthirds, her friend and fellow church member. "If ever I or anyone else needed help, she would be there."

The Rev. Kurt Boggan, district superintendent, said Wilson spoke for the entire group when he met with members of Central and the two other churches in the charge last year to talk about what they were looking for in their next pastor.

"She said, 'We need a pastor who has a Methodist presence,'" Boggan recalled.

A few months after Platt arrived, Wilson called Boggan to report on her new pastor. "We've got a fine one," she said.

"This is the kind of person she was," Platt said, "My father died last year after I'd only been here for a short while. Lil and another church member came to the funeral to give me comfort. That meant the world to me."

Her devotion to following Christ's example extended beyond her local congregation.

Central wasn't big enough to have its own United Methodist Women's group, so Wilson became active with the group at Wynne First United Methodist Church. On Communion Sunday each month, Wilson organized a collection of groceries at Central and Ellis Chapel for the food pantry at the larger Wynne congregation.

She also volunteered as a greeter at Cross County Hospital and helped out at the local animal shelter. She had a sign that said "We Love Animals" outside her home, Platt said.

Still in shock, her fellow church members gathered on Sunday to pray and weep together. They met outside the church, which was covered in yellow police tape.

Arkansas Area Bishop Charles Crutchfield asked those gathered for annual conference on June 7 to pray for Wilson and the many in her community who



A United Methodist News Service file photo by Mary Anne Cruthirds

Lillian Wilson, center, poses with her pastor, Dixon Platt and church member Norris Cruthirds at Central United Methodist Church near Wynne, during preparations for Easter in this April 2010 file photograph. Wilson, 80, was found beaten to death inside the church. The flowered cross, which is decorated each year for Easter, was made by Wilson's late husband and church member Art Wilson.

loved her.

"This is a tragic moment for a wonderful woman devoted to the life of the church and building God's kingdom, a woman who had been the heart and soul of her church," Crutchfield said in an interview.

"At moments like this, we ask 'Why? Why?' And there is no real answer to that question," he said. "But I do know the question we need to ask is who do we

trust in a moment of tragedy, in a moment so inexplicable. I think our answer would be her answer: Trust the Lord through high points and low points, through good times and through the valley of the shadow of death. In the wake of this tragic death, that's who we all have to trust."

*Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for United Methodist News Service.*

## 2010 Ingathering Event Dedicated to Wilson

United Methodists from more than 690 Arkansas churches plan to dedicate their annual mission event, Ingathering, to Lill Wilson. Wilson, a member of Central United Methodist Church near Wynne, Ark., was attacked and killed at the church while gathering cleaning buckets and health kits to bring to the denomination's annual conference meeting in Hot Springs.

"The best way we can remember Lill, a woman committed to serving others, is by dedicating this year's Ingathering to her," said Rev. Pat Bodenhamer, chair of the Arkansas Conference Board of Global Ministries and pastor of Diamond City and Omaha United Methodist Churches. Bodenhamer will coordinate this year's event, scheduled for November 20. Plans for the event are underway, added

Bodenhamer.

Ingathering is the culmination of a year-long effort where church members collect items which are then brought to the Rice Depot's distribution center in Little Rock. Volunteers are on hand to unload trucks and cars, sort the items and prepare them to be sent to Arkansas families as well as those in areas affected by natural disasters across the globe.

"Ingathering is a special time for our churches and the Rice Depot," said Bodenhamer. "We know this year there will be an extraordinary outpouring as we remember a woman who gave her life doing what she loved—caring for others."

To learn more about how to participate in the 2010 Ingathering, visit [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org)

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## Bishop Urges Change

*Continued from front page*

United Methodist Church in Little Rock, and O.D. Turner, the church's pastor emeritus, were so inspired by the bishop's invitation to imagine ministry that they continued the discussion outside the breakout sessions.

Some years ago, the church had closed and the remaining congregation had merged with the far larger St. James UMC in west Little Rock. But six years ago, Faith UMC was reconstituted as a new church start and that's when Howe came aboard. The new church currently has 149 members and its weekly attendance has been hovering around 100.

"We've become a Lazarus model," Howe said. "We're looking at Imagine Ministry as an opportunity to re-examine where we are, to get the laity on board to examine intentionally the ministries in the church. The church is the people. It doesn't matter which pastor is moving in or out if the people don't own the programs themselves."

Will Choate, a newly ordained elder, said he's hearing similar sentiments from younger clergy across the conference.

Choate has spent the last year thinking of new ways to do church as pastor of Argenta United Methodist Church, a growing second campus of North Little Rock First UMC in the city's trendy downtown neighborhood.

"I think we're learning to understand the conference not as an office or staff positions but to understand the conference as a body of people with a network of relationships," he said. "In the same

way churches have learned that when a preacher leaves, the preacher is not the church, we're learning we have to take responsibility for the church. It's rethinking connectionalism."

The ongoing Imagine Ministry process is funded by a grant from the United Methodist Foundation of Arkansas. Jim Argue, the chief executive officer of the foundation and a member of the Imagine Ministry team, said this is a process he was eager to join.

"[The foundation], as a servant institution to the Arkansas Conference, is dedicated to strengthening the church's ministry in Arkansas," he said. "Imagine Ministry is exploring strategies to improve the Conference's effectiveness in ministry. Thus, Imagine Ministry is a natural fit."

The bishop is hopeful that after two years in the wilderness, the conference membership will have a better sense of how to reach the Promised Land.

"We were born for this hour, for this day, for this week, for this year," he said at the end of his address. "God has given into our hands the gift of a precious opportunity. ... We can stay as we are and slowly die. We can embrace the risk of deep change and live."

*Hahn is a multimedia news reporter for the United Methodist News Service.*

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Greg Schick, pastor of contemporary worship at St. James United Methodist Church in Little Rock, opens Monday's session of Annual Conference with worship music.



Pictured from left is the 2010-2011 cabinet, the bishop and assistant to the bishop of the Arkansas Conference. Pictured from left are Phil Hathcock, director of conference ministries and assistant to the bishop; Mackey Yokem, Northwest District superintendent; Kurt Boggan, Northeast District superintendent; Dede Roberts, Central District superintendent; Mike Morey, West District superintendent; Bishop Charles Crutchfield; C.E. McAdoo, Southwest District superintendent; Chester Ray Jones, South Central District superintendent; Dennis Spence, Southeast District superintendent; Rodney Steele, North Central District superintendent and Charles Thomas Settle, North District superintendent.



Mary Jane Cole, associate pastor at Little Rock First United Methodist Church, was ordained a deacon in full connection with the Arkansas Conference on June 8.



From left, Jim Alex Workman Jr., Glenn Hicks, Jimmy Mosby, Heather Spencer, Ben Crismon, Zeke Allen and Mark Massey were commissioned on June 8 at Annual Conference.



The Arkansas Conference received Patty Sue Crain Soward, associate pastor at Jonesboro First United Methodist Church, into associate membership on June 8.





Retired Bishop Felton May and Bishop Charles Crutchfield before the ordination service.



ABOVE: Diane Vogler, chair of the conference sending team, and Bishop Charles Crutchfield present a Michah Award to Haven United Methodist Church in Hot Springs. Pictured are Shirley Williams, Clyde Hughley, pastor and Hazel Wright. LEFT: Bishop Charles Crutchfield leads participants in the Holy Healthy 5K Run/Walk in prayer before the start of the Tuesday morning exercise.



From left, Stephen Dickinson, Reggie Russell, Andrea Allen, Matt Daniels, Regina Gideon, Dany Partlow, Ulysses Washington, Jason Suffin, Herschel Richardson Jr., Josh Ditmer, Mark Norman, Zach Underwood, Will Choate, Claire Caldwell, Troy Conrad, James Wainscott and Brock Patterson were ordained elders in full connection on June 8 at Annual Conference.



# 2010-11 Conference Appointments

## Central District Diedre Jo Roberts, Superintendent

AMBOY	Bob Edwards
ARGENTA	Will Choate
ASBURY-LR	Bryan Fink
Associate	Nathan Kilbourne
Associate	David M. Moore
BETHEL (CE)	Thomas Babington
CANVAS COMMUNITY	Jamey Bentley
FAITH	Susan Howe
FAITHSPRING	Brock Patterson
GARDNER MEMORIAL	Richard S. Mitchell
Associate	John O. Alston
GEYER SPRINGS	Deanna L. McCormack
HENDERSON	Kevin Lyon
HIGHLAND VALLEY	Daniel R. Kirkpatrick
Associate	Bill Cato
HOOVER	C. J. Duvall
Associate	Ismail M. A. Saafir
HOPE KOREAN CHURCH	Ohyeoun Kim
Associate	Billy Howard Cox
HUNTER	Melvin Moss
JACKSONVILLE FIRST	John Mark McDonald
Associate	Charles Watt
LAKESWOOD	Richard Lancaster
Associate	Andrea Allen
Deacon	Cynthia Henry Russell
LEVY	John Wedaman
LITTLE ROCK FIRST	Michael Mattox
Associate	Donna Hankins-Hull
Deacon	Mary Jane Cole
MABELVALE	Robert Marble
MAUMELLE FIRST	Luke Conway
Associate	Zeke Allen
Associate	Wayne Jarvis
Associate	Peter Weber
MCCABE CHAPEL	Deena Marie Hamilton
MOUNT PLEASANT	Mary N. Jones
NEW HAVEN-LR	Norma Gillerson
NLR FIRST	Davis Thompson
Associate	James W. Choate
Associate	R. Leon Gray
NORTH PULASKI	Carol S. Goddard
OAK FOREST	Russell D. Breshears
Deacon	Amanda Moore
PRIMROSE	Clayton Bulice
PULASKI HEIGHTS	Britt Skarda
Associate	Harriett Akins-Banman
Associate	Heath Bradley
Associate	Jeffery Bernard Hampton
Associate	Lynn W. Lindsey
Deacon	Gail Hocott
Deacon	James Scott Moore
QUAPAW QUARTER	Thompson Murray
Associate	Elizabeth Anne Holcomb
SAINT ANDREW-LR	Carol Ann Blow
SAINT JAMES-LR	Fred Haustein
Associate	Clark Atkins
Associate	John Embrey
Associate	William J. Sardin
Associate	Gregory Schick
SAINT LUKE-LR	Pauleen Ann Harrison
SAINT PAUL-LR	Blake Russell Bradford
SAINT PAUL MAUMELLE	Reginald Russell
SWEET HOME-LR	Barbara A. Douglas
SYLVAN HILLS	Beverly Watkins
TRINITY-LR	N. Robin Moore
Associate	Mary Candace Barron
TRINITY-NLR	Gerald Meeks
WESLEY CHAPEL/DUNCAN/PHILANDER SMITH	Ronnie L. Miller-Yow
Associate	Betty Scull
WESTERN HILLS-LR	Sylvia Nosis
WHITE MEMORIAL/MARKS CHAPEL	James Lee Scruggs
WINFIELD	Larry Hughes

## North District Charles T. Settle, Superintendent

ALPENA/BERGMAN	Les Bailey
ANTIOCH/HARMONY	TBS
ASH FLAT/EVENING SHADE	Larry Morris
BALD KNOB/RUSSELL	Treva Mills
BATESVILLE FIRST	Bob Burton
	Kay Burton
BEEBE	Russell Hull
BRADFORD/PLEASANT PLAINS	William P. Mills
BULL SHOALS/YELLVILLE	Nicholas C Lascaro
CALICO ROCK/SPRING CREEK	Mike Smith
CAVE CITY/BEAR CREEK	Roger Hook

CEDAR GROVE (S)	Aline McCracken
CEDAR GROVE(N)/PLEASANT RIDGE	Donald Cremer
CENTRAL AVENUE	Paul Seay
CHEROKEE VILLAGE	Ted DeWeese
Associate	Jimmy Anderson
CLINTON	Vaughn Marsden
CORINTH/POWELL'S CHAPEL	Robert Kegerize
DAMASCUS	William Grothe
DESHA/CONCORD/CORNERSTONE	
JAMESTOWN	Steve Long

DIAMOND CITY/OMAHA	Patricia Bodenhamer
EVERTON/VALLEY SPRINGS	David M. Smith
FAIRFIELD BAY	Paul Strang
FAIRVIEW	James F. Snow
FORREST CHAPEL/BROCKWELL	Loye Vern Mason
GRIFFITHVILLE/DOGWOOD/ELLIS CHAPEL	Billy D. Wise
GUION	Robert Ernest
GUM SPRINGS	Jim Bradberry
HARDY	Brien Hall
HARRISON FIRST	John D. Darnall
HARRISON SAINT PAUL/BELLEFONTE/VALLEY VIEW	Mark Donald
HAZEL EDWARDS MEMORIAL/OIL TROUGH	Brian K. Pruett
HEBER SPRINGS	Thomas Toombs

Local pastor	Kathy DeBusk
HIGGINSON	Elton Hughes
HOLIDAY HILLS	C. Daniel Brand
HORSESHOE BEND/WISEMAN	Nancy Cameron
JASPER	Larry M. Acton
JUDSONIA/KENSETT	Floyd Ray
LESLIE/MARSHALL	Ellis Edward Warren
MAMMOTH SPRING/CAMP	J. R. McElhannon
MCRAE/GARNER	Gill Sills
MELBOURNE/BETHESDA/CUSHMAN	Terry Sager
MOOREFIELD/OAK RIDGE	Lavon Bloodworth
MOUNT PLEASANT	Harold Moore
MOUNTAIN HOME	Siegfried Johnson
Associate	Randy D. Ludwig
MOUNTAIN VIEW/ST. JAMES	Ron Newberry
NEWPORT FIRST	Brad Elrod
OAK GROVE	TBS
OXFORD	Bobby Coleman
PANGBURN/MOUNT PISGAH	David Doyle
QUITMAN	David Caswell
ROSEBUD	Kathy DeBusk
SAINT PAUL	Mary Susan Hilliard
Associate	Michael Bolin
SALEM/VIOLA	Dany Partlow
SEARCY FIRST	Keith Goz
Associate	Charles Dee Harper
SHARP/ASBURY	Jerry Lumpkin
SHIRLEY	Ruth Ann Landon - Mueller
SOUTHSIDE	James T. Pierce
STONE POINT/FLOYD	Robert Mark Quick
TUCKERMAN/SWIFTON	Donald Lewert
UMSTED MEMORIAL/EMORY CHAPEL	Jimmy J. Mosby
WESLEY/NORFORK	Sara J. Gotschall
WILD CHERRY	Marty Sanders

## North Central District Rodney G. Steele, Superintendent

ADONA	Frankie Reynolds
ATKINS/BELLS CHAPEL	Danyelle E. Ditmer
BETHLEHEM/PROVIDENCE	Toby Austin
CABOT	Beth Waldrup
Associate	Richmond P. Meadows
Associate	Raymond Vining
CARLISLE	Ryan Rush
CENTERVILLE	Lana Gartner
CHICKALAH/OAK GROVE	Larry Johnson
CHRIST	Aubrietta Lynn Jones

CLEVELAND/OVERCUP	Jeffery Warrick
CONCORD	Josh Allen
CONWAY FIRST	Julia Beth Turner
Associate	Charles Murry
CROSSPOINT	Regina Gideon
DANVILLE/TRINITY	Tammy Garrison
DARDANELLE/LIBERTY HALL	Thomas Sullinger
DES ARC	James A. Benfer
DOVER	Michael W. Topham
EBENEZER	Joshua M. Ditmer
ENGLAND	Andrew L. Balenton
GRACE	Jay Glenn Culpepper
Associate	David Hawkins
GRAVEL HILL-SAINT PAUL/BRIGGSVILLE	Greg Comer
GREENBRIER	Steve Lawrence
Associate	John Farthing
HAMILTON/HUMNOKE	Donna Bennett
	Roger E. Glover

HAVANA	Paul Ed Seay, Jr.
HAZEN/DEVALLS BLUFF	Carolyn Doering
HEBRON	Roger Crouch
HICKORY PLAINS	Deborah D. Harrison
KEO	Charles Perry
LONOKE FIRST	Stephen Brizzi
LONOKE SAINT JAMES	David Scruggs
MAYFLOWER	Rick Wilkins
MORRILTON	Gerald Collins
MOUNT CARMEL/GRAHAM CHAPEL	Thomas E. Lukas
MOUNT TABOR	Jason Sutfin
MOUNT ZION	William Paul Woolley
NAYLOR	Luke Parker
NEW ZION/MOUNT ZION	Johnnie Davis
OAKLAND	LaNita Daniels
OLA/PLAINVIEW	Thomas Mullins
OLD AUSTIN	Aubrietta Jones
PERRYVILLE	David E. Baker
PLUMERVILLE	William Dane Womack
POTTSVILLE	Mildred F. Bryant
RUSSELLVILLE FIRST	Roy Smith
Associate	Gail Cole Baldwin
Associate	Robert E. Woody
SALEM	Jaimie Jack Alexander
SOUTH BEND	Garren Earle Hagemeyer
SPRINGFIELD/MALLETOWN	Austin Coleman
VILONIA	Belinda Price
WARD/SIXTEENTH SECTION	Wesley Howard, Jr.
WESLEY-CONWAY	David D. Hoffman
WESLEY-RUSSELLVILLE	David Scroggin
WYE	Mark Matthews

## Northeast District W. Kurt Boggan, Superintendent

AUGUSTA/TUPELO	Robert DeBaun
BAY	Heath Williams
BEECH GROVE/PRUETT'S CHAPEL	Dwayne Smith
BLACK ROCKLYNN	Christopher Whitehead
BLYTHEVILLE FIRST	Donald L. Hall, Jr.
BROOKLAND	James Wainscott
CAMPGROUND	George Edward Harris
CHERRY VALLEY/VANNDALE	Jim West
CHRIST UNITED	John Snyder
CHRIST WAY	Herschel L. Richardson, Jr.
COLT/FORREST CPL	Everett Blakely
CORNERSTONE	William Christopher Cooper
Associate	Jeanne Williams
Deacon	Rebecca Boggan
CORNING	Donna Alberts
DELL	Marilyn Webb
EARLE	James Robert Wilson
ELI LINDSEY	John Stoll
ELLIS CHAPEL	Melvin Mann
FARM HILL	Jerry A. Hall
FISHER STREET	Nancy M. Rainwater
FORREST CITY FIRST	Jan Edwards
GRIFFIN MEMORIAL	Michael Sutton
HARRISBURG FIRST	J. Beth Perdue
HICKORY RIDGE	Michael Utley
HOXIE	Michael Winberry
HUGHES/WIDENER	Marilyn Neal
IMBODEN/SMITHVILLE	Bob J. McMillon
JONESBORO FIRST	John P. Miles, II
Associate	Blake Langston
Associate	Patty Sue Soward
LEACHVILLE	Douglas Criss
LEPANTO/JOINER	Janice Williams
MANILA/COMMUNITY	Jerry Pentecost
MARION	James Steve Wingo
MARKED TREE	Ron C. Williams
MARMADUKE	Wayne Baldwin
MARS HILL	Don Joe Hewett
MAYNARD	Thomas Dellinger
MCCRORY	Dixon Platt
MONETTE	Jerry W. Reed
MOUNT CARMEL	Clarence Edward Pruett
NETTLETON	Harmon B. Whitehurst
OSCEOLA	Bill Lindsey Fish
PARAGOULD FIRST	Tom M. Letchworth
Associate	Angela Gage
Associate	Jeff Weaver
PARKIN	William Joe Head
PIGGOTT FIRST	John Sandine
PLEASANT GROVE	Nan Nelson
POCAHONTAS	Rockey Earl Starnes
RAVENDEN	Danny Roark
RECTOR	Mace Straubel
RIVER OF LIFE	Gary Tobar
ROCK SPRINGS/RAMER'S CHAPEL	H. Mark Trout



# 2010-11 Conference Appointments

SAINT PAUL.....	Charles Sigman
SCHUGTOWN.....	James Kjolraug
SEDGWICK.....	Herb Brubaker
SHILOH.....	David Swift
TRUMANN/TYRONZA.....	Charles Cooper
WALNUT RIDGE.....	Steve Cook
WARREN'S CHAPEL/WOOD'S CHAPEL.....	Dan Morrison
WEINER.....	Dan L Walker
WEST MEMPHIS FIRST.....	David F. Moseley
Associate.....	Sheila M. Jones
WHEATLEY/SALEM.....	Charlotte Staggs
WHITE HALL.....	Stephen Anderson
WILSON/KEISER.....	Gary Yarbrough
WYNNE.....	Glenn Pettus

## Northwest District G. Mackey Yokem, Superintendent

ARKANSAS KOREAN MISSION.....	Young Jin Kim
BELLA VISTA FIRST.....	Sara S. Bainbridge
BELLA VISTA HIGHLANDS.....	Rex G. Darling
Associate.....	J. Michael Callahan
BENTONVILLE.....	Rex Dickey
Associate.....	Don Bortell
Associate.....	Ben Hines
Associate.....	Susan Ledbetter
BERRYVILLE/SHILOH.....	Rebecca S. Wiseman
	Stephen Wiseman
BETEL/WESLEY.....	Ramiro Lizcano
Associate.....	Kenneth R. Lee
BLAND CHAPEL.....	David E. Mack
DECATUR.....	Audie Long
ELKINS.....	John Humphries
ELM SPRINGS.....	Carl D. Palmer
EUREKA SPRINGS.....	Stanley Wade Adams
FARMINGTON.....	Justin Ledbetter
FAYETTEVILLE CENTRAL.....	J. Anthony Holifield
Associate.....	Steve K. Pulliam
Associate.....	Cleifton Samuel Vaughan
FAYETTEVILLE SAINT JAMES.....	Charles White
FAYETTEVILLE SEQUOYAH.....	Sara Pair
FAYETTEVILLE TRINITY.....	Terry M. Gosnell
GENTRY.....	George Adkins
GOSHEN.....	Frank Cook
GRAVETTE/SULPHUR SPRINGS.....	Alex Flores
GREEN FOREST.....	Donnie Hudson
HARMON.....	J. Michael Callahan
HUNTSVILLE/PRESLEY CHAPEL.....	Allan Crum
LINCOLN/CINCINNATI.....	Andy Newbill
LIVING WATERS AT CENTERTON.....	Blake A. Lasater
MORROW.....	John M. Moore
PEA RIDGE/BRIGHTWATER.....	Brian Timmons
PRAIRIE GROVE.....	Matthew H. Johnson
RIVERSIDE FELLOWSHIP.....	Rob Williams
ROGERS CENTRAL.....	Carness Vaughan
Associate.....	James Dell Keith
Deacon.....	J. Lester Oliver
Deacon.....	Dawn Spragg
ROGERS FIRST.....	David Bentley
Deacon.....	H. Cathy Caudle
Deacon.....	Sandra Wanasek
ROGERS GRACE.....	Harry T. Cross
ROGERS OAKLEY CHAPEL.....	Shane Pair
SILOAM SPRINGS.....	Randy H. Rowlan
SPRINGDALE FIRST.....	Stephen Coburn
Associate.....	Michael I. Felder
Associate.....	David C. Freeman
Deacon.....	Judith S. Van Hoose
TUCKS CHAPEL.....	Brian Youngs
VINEY GROVE.....	G Randall Nix
WEDINGTON.....	Joseph W. Hall
WIGGINS/WINSLOW.....	Gary B. Lunsford

## South Central District Chester R. Jones, Superintendent

AMITY.....	Glen Dale Harris
ARKADELPHIA FIRST.....	Carroll D. Jackson
BENTON FIRST.....	George W. McCoy
Associate.....	Robert Cloninger
Associate.....	Garry Teeter
BETHEL.....	Albert Marlar
BISMARCK.....	Heather Spencer
BRYANT FIRST.....	Todd-Paul Taulbee
Associate.....	Lynn Cross Kilbourne
CENTER GROVE (Grant County).....	James Bacon
CHRIST OF THE HILLS.....	Walter L. Smith
Associate.....	Patrick O. Henry
Associate.....	Helen Stegall
CONGO.....	Polly Burton

DIAMONDHEAD.....	Michael S. Fikes
FAITH/MORNING STAR.....	Mark R. Williams
FRIENDSHIP.....	Robert Reid
GARDNER.....	Bruce T. Howard
GLENWOOD/DAISY.....	Elizabeth Stegall
GRAND AVENUE.....	George Rook
GURDON.....	Gregory A. Burks
HAVEN.....	Clyde Hughley
HOLLYWOOD.....	Carla Thompson
HOT SPRINGS FIRST.....	William O. Reeves
Associate.....	Teresa Holt
Associate.....	John P. Miles
Associate.....	Carl A. Ownbey
Associate.....	John S. Polk
KEITH MEMORIAL/L'EAU FRAIZ.....	Dale L. Diffie
LANGLEY.....	Lindsey Saenz
LEOLA/MOORES CHAPEL.....	Bill Bradford
MALVERN FIRST.....	Lavon Post
MANCHESTER.....	George T. Whitney
MOUNT CARMEL.....	Bob Warford
MOUNT IDA/JOPLIN.....	David Steele
Associate.....	Terry Scott
MOUNT ZION.....	Travis Langley
MOUNTAINSIDE.....	Chris Hemund
NEW SALEM.....	Donald H Robinson
NORMAN.....	James Michael Smith
OAKLAWN.....	Fred W. Hunter
OKOLONA/CENTER GROVE/TRINITY.....	Troy Cate
PARKVIEW/NEW HOPE.....	Bill Steele
PINEY GROVE.....	Scott Gallimore
Associate.....	Jacob Lynn
Associate.....	Rose A. Poag
PLEASANT HILL.....	Vince Crawford
PULLMAN HEIGHTS/GUM SPRINGS.....	Ron Grigsby
SAINT ANDREW.....	Bob W. Sanders
SAINT PAUL/ADKINS MEMORIAL.....	Clarence Fowler
SALEM BENTON.....	Denman L Gillett
SARDIS.....	John Jeffrey Jones
SHERIDAN.....	John Andrew Fleming
SHOREWOOD HILLS/MAGNET COVE/ ROCKPORT.....	Robert C. Clark
TRASKWOOD/EBENEZER.....	Randy Reed
VILLAGE.....	George McCoy
Associate.....	Tom Jarrell
Associate.....	Wanda Murray

## Southeast District Dennis Spence, Superintendent

ALMYRA/HUNTER'S CHAPEL.....	Ted Edmondson
ALTHEIMER.....	Fred Arnold
BAILEY CHAPEL.....	Travis Earl Jackson
BAYOU METO/LODGES CORNER.....	Judith Ross
BRINKLEY/BRASFIELD.....	James L. French
CARTHAGE/HUNTER'S CHAPEL/TULIP/WAVERLY.....	James E. Batts
CLARENDON/HOLLY GROVE.....	Judy Clark
CROSSETT.....	Russell R. Moore
DEWITT/ST. CHARLES.....	Larry Martineau
DUMAS/TILLAR.....	Tandy Hanson
EUDORA/PARKDALE.....	Chyrl Savage Slocum
EXTRA.....	Bonnie Carol Moore
FORDYCE FIRST.....	Hammitt Evans
GILLETT/DELUCHE.....	Charles Coffelt
GOOD FAITH CARR.....	Walter Michael Wilkie
GOOD HOPE/NEW EDINBURG.....	John H. Kidwell
GRADY/TRINITY.....	Lee Alan Zuehlke
GRAND AVE-STUTTGART.....	Edward Wyers
GREENHILL/LACY.....	J. Donald Johnson
HAMBURG FIRST.....	David A. Moore
Associate.....	Bonnie Carol Moore
HAMPTON/HARREL/FAUSTINA.....	Harry J. Hamner
HAWLEY MEMORIAL/WESLEY.....	Jason Ferguson
HEBRON.....	Maurice Caldwell
HELENA FIRST.....	Mark Massey
HERMITAGE/WAGNON.....	Marty Reep
HUMPHREY.....	George Edward Crumbly, Jr.
KINGSLAND/CHAMBERSVILLE.....	Mark Rivers
KYNETTE.....	Kennis Key
LAKE VILLAGE/MONTROSE.....	Tyrone Hill
LAKESIDE.....	Pam Estes
Associate.....	Alicia Bobo Frye
LIVINGSTON CHAPEL.....	Lawrence O. Taylor
MARIANNA/BEAR CREEK CAMP.....	Gordon Mohr
MARTIN'S CHAPEL.....	Melissa Maskell
MARVELL/LEXA.....	Kirk Doering
MCGEHEE/ARKANSAS CITY.....	Mary Love Loftis
MCGEHEE WESLEY.....	Barton Bynum
MONTICELLO FIRST.....	William Alfred Eason
MT. OLIVE/BETHEL/WILSON CHAPEL.....	L.T. Marks
MT. OLIVET/PROSPERITY/UNION.....	Garry E. Wiles
NEW HOPE.....	Danny Dunlap

PALESTINE/TRINITY-WARREN.....	Charles W. Cauley
PINE BLUFF FIRST.....	David Fleming
Associate.....	Edna Morgan
PLEASANT GROVE.....	Gene White
PORTLAND/DERMOTT/WILMOT.....	Terrie L. Bunnell
REDFIELD.....	Mary F. Welch
RISON/MOUNT CARMEL.....	Glenn Hicks
ROCK SPRINGS/WILMAR/MT. PLEASANT/ANDREWS CHAPEL.....	Hardy Peacock
ROE.....	Joe E. Glover
SAINT FRANCIS.....	Jonah Wayne Smith
SAINT JAMES.....	Henry Wilkins
Associate.....	Linda K. Duncan
SAINT LUKE.....	James Edward Conn
SAINT MARK.....	David Morgan
SCRUGGS CHAPEL.....	John W. Love
SHERRILL.....	William Ferguson
SPARKMAN/DALARK/BETHLEHEM.....	S. Royce Savage
STAR CITY FIRST.....	Bryan R. Diffie
STUTTGART FIRST.....	David W. Bush
SULPHUR SPRINGS.....	Roger Armstrong
WABBASEKA.....	George Mitchell
WALLER'S CHAPEL/FT. HILL/ZION.....	Boyd F. Savage, Jr.
WARREN FIRST.....	Gary Maskell
WATSON/MT. TABOR.....	Walt Lowe
WESLEY CHAPEL/TAYLOR CHAPEL.....	William J. Thompson
WEST HELENA/ELAINE.....	Richard P. Rogers
WHITE HALL.....	Johnna J. Galloway

## Southwest District C. E. McAdoo, Superintendent

ASBURY.....	Michael P. Daniel
ASHDOWN/RICHMOND.....	James H. Cross
AVERY'S CHAPEL/BRUCE MEMORIAL/MIDWAY.....	Jimmy Keith Teeter
BEARDEN/THORNTON.....	Andrew Wayne Hughes
BELL CHAPEL/RED HILL.....	Larry E. Goza
BRADLEY.....	John Braden
BUENA VISTA/STEPHENS.....	Cedric R. Walters
CAMDEN FIRST.....	Henry Andrew Ratliff
CENTER/CENTER POINT.....	Robert B McCoy
CHRIST.....	J. David Kassos
DELIGHT/ANTOINE/SMYRNA.....	James T. Henderson
DEQUEEN FIRST/GILLHAM.....	David S. Williams
DIERKS/GREEN'S CHAPEL.....	Robert Lyons
DODDRIDGE/OLIVE BRANCH.....	Walter L. Burnett
DUMAS MEMORIAL/MARYSVILLE.....	Pat Odum
EBENEZER/SCOTT'S MEMORIAL.....	Shirley White-Souder
EL DORADO FIRST.....	James P. Polk
Associate.....	Brittany Richardson
EMERSON/MT. PISGAH.....	Barbara Lewis
EMMET/HARMONY/WILLISVILLE.....	Jerry G. Westmoreland
FAIRVIEW (Camden).....	Pamela K. Brule
FAIRVIEW (Texarkana)/OGDEN.....	Barbara B. Gilbert
FOREMAN/WADE'S CHAPEL.....	Daryl E. Hines
FRIENDSHIP.....	Gene M. Ross
GREER'S CHAPEL/LYDESDALE.....	J. Mark Lasater
HALL'S MEMORIAL.....	Joyce Watson
HARMONY/PHILADELPHIA/UNITY.....	J. Wayne Edwards
HARMONY GROVE/LAKESIDE/HOLLY SPRINGS.....	James E. Harris
HINTON/DEANN.....	Byron Mann
HOLLY SPRINGS (Texarkana).....	J. Doug Rhodes
HOPE FIRST.....	Steven Johnson
HORATIO/WINTROP.....	Fred R. Smith
HUTTIG.....	Robert Earl Ballard
JUNCTION CITY.....	Lynn McClure
LEWISVILLE.....	Ronnie K Eldridge
LISBON.....	Ralph Gary Riley
LOCKESBURG/BEN LOMOND.....	Michael G. Jennings
MACEDONIA/MOUNT CARMEL.....	Tommy Halsell
MAGNOLIA FIRST.....	Larry E. Kelso
MINERAL SPRINGS/WAKEFIELD.....	Spencer G. Plumley
MT. MORIAH/VALLEY GROVE.....	James J. Fort
MURFREESBORO.....	Troy Thomas
NASHVILLE/BINGEN.....	Paul Coy
NEW ERA.....	Charles Payne
NORPHLET/CENTENNIAL.....	W. Zachary Roberts
PARKER'S CHAPEL/PLEASANT GROVE.....	Phil Worley
PRESCOTT FIRST.....	Carlton Cross
RHODES CHAPEL.....	James Carroll Rawls
RONDO/PLEASANT HILL.....	Robert C. Armstrong
RUSHING MEMORIAL.....	Jessica Tanner
SAINT JOHN.....	W. Joe Miller
SAINT MARK.....	Mike Proctor
SAINT PAUL.....	Robert H. Walker
SCOTT'S MEMORIAL.....	Ella Harris
SILVER SPRINGS.....	Tony Huffman
SMACKOVER/SILVER HILL.....	Leon T. Dixon, Jr.
SPRING HILL/OAK GROVE.....	Revel Kidd
STAMPS.....	Terry Mann
SUGAR HILL TEXARKANA.....	George Edwin Odell
SWEET HOME UNION.....	Gene M. Ross



# 2010-11 Conference Appointments

SWEET HOME ..... Al Terrell  
 TAYLOR ..... Ray Durham  
 TEXARKANA FIRST ..... Bruce Wayne Bennett  
*Associate* ..... Vicky Lynn Stephens  
 TIMOTHY/McNeil ..... Mike Jennings  
 VILLAGE/EBENEZER (Stephens) ..... Robert A. Terry, Jr.  
 WASHINGTON/SARDIS ..... Keenan C. Williams  
 WESTSIDE/MISSOURI ..... Donald Nicholson  
 WILEY CHAPEL ..... TBS

## West District Michael Morey, Superintendent

ALMA ..... Velda Bell  
 ALTUS/GRENADES CHAPEL ..... John Noggle  
 BARLING ..... Steve Holyfield  
 BONANZA ..... Jeffery L. Blassingame  
 BOONEVILLE ..... Bonda Deere Moyer  
 CAVANAUGH/HACKETT ..... Troy Conrad  
 CECIL ..... Jerry Eubanks  
 CHARLESTON ..... William V. Buchanan  
 CITY HEIGHTS ..... Randy L. Miller  
 CLARKSVILLE ..... David R. Hanshaw  
 COLES CHAPEL/BRANCH/PIONEER MEMORIAL ..... Judy Hall  
 DYER ..... Cheryl Costner  
     Philip Costner  
 FAITH ..... Charles W. Armour  
*Associate* ..... Jeffery L. Blassingame  
 FORT SMITH FIRST ..... David Paul Orr  
*Associate* ..... Claire Caldwell  
*Associate* ..... Claire Hoffman  
*Associate* ..... Janice Sudbrink  
 GODDARD ..... W. Wade Shownes  
*Associate* ..... Carter Ferguson  
 GRACE ..... William B. Leslie  
*Associate* ..... Davida Autry  
*Associate* ..... Margaret Sue Kelly  
 GRAVELLY/BLUFFTON ..... Joy Carmean  
 GREENWOOD ..... Craig Russell  
*Associate* ..... William Zachary Underwood  
 HARTFORD/MIDLAND ..... Chris Rink  
 HARTMAN/SPADRA/HAYS CHAPEL ..... Regina Turner  
 HATFIELD/CHERRY HILL ..... James Lybrand  
 HERITAGE ..... James Wesley Hilliard  
 HUNTINGTON ..... Frank Grubbs  
 JOURNEY ..... Ricky Lee Huggins  
 KIBLER ..... Vida R. Williams  
 LAMAR/MOUNT OLIVE ..... Tammy Jo Teltow  
 LAVACA/MOUNTAIN VIEW ..... Lynn David Strang  
 MAGAZINE/MOORE'S CHAPEL/WAVELAND ..... Phil Sturdy  
 MANSFIELD ..... Jackie Ann Gregory  
 MENA FIRST ..... Gary Frank Harrison  
 MIDLAND HEIGHTS ..... Daniel Lane Williams  
 MILLTOWN ..... Louise Finney  
 MISSION ..... Ulysses C. Washington  
 MOUNT OLIVE ..... Barry D. Morton  
 MOUNT PLEASANT/PARKS/SQUARE ROCK/BIRDSVIEW ..... Patricia Diane Miller  
 MULBERRY ..... Charles B. Beevers  
 NEW BETHEL ..... Charles Jordan  
 NEW HOPE/NEWBERRY ..... Robert M. Jeffery

NORTH FORT SMITH HISPANIC MISSION ..... Julio Ibarra  
 OZARK ..... Royal Keith Dodson  
 PARIS/PRAIRIE VIEW ..... James Rowland  
 SAINT PAUL ..... Steven M. Poarch  
*Associate* ..... Geral Holloway  
*Deacon* ..... Mark L. Waynick  
 VESTA ..... Jonathan Payne  
 VIETNAMESE MISSION (Fort Smith) ..... Terry Gallamore  
 VIETNAMESE (Van Buren) ..... Thang Nguyen  
 WALDRON ..... Joe R. Kitchens  
 WALTREAK ..... Larry Pat Millard  
 WASHBURN ..... H. Gaylan Cope  
 WESLEY ..... Matthew Daniels  
 WICKES/MOUNTAIN VIEW (Mena) ..... Bryan Richardson  
 WOODLANDS ..... Ben H. Anderson

## Other Appointments Extension Ministries

DIRECTOR OF CONFERENCE MINISTRIES,  
 ASSISTANT TO THE BISHOP ..... Philip L. Hathcock  
 CASA de DIOS ..... Mary Olson  
 CONFERENCE MINISTER OF NEW CHURCH STARTS  
 AND CONGREGATIONAL ADVANCEMENT ..... Robert O. Crossman  
 DIRECTOR, CONNECTED IN CHRIST ..... Michael Roberts  
 LAKE REGIONAL HEALTH SYSTEMS ..... Aric Bokker  
 CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL ..... Adam Kirby  
 COORDINATOR FOR SPIRITUAL FORMATION,  
 HENDRIX COLLEGE ..... Amanda Moore  
 HORIZONS ..... James Clifton Christopher  
 JUSTICE FOR OUR NEIGHBORS ..... Stephen J. Copley  
     Melissa Thomas  
 METHODIST FAMILY HEALTH ..... James Scott Moore  
 PERKINS SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY ..... Rebekah Linn Miles  
 ARKANSAS HOSPICE ..... Helen Jean Burton  
 UMCOR DISASTER RESPONSE ..... Franklin Thomas Hazelwood  
 WESLEY ENHANCED LIVING ..... Joe Michael Campbell  
 ASBURY SEMINARY ..... Robert Holifield  
 TEXAS DEPT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ..... Catherine Estes  
 COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL ..... Samuel Teague  
 CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY COUNCIL  
     Burnley Bruce Cook  
 DAYSRING BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES ..... Dana Thomason  
 HENDRIX COLLEGE ..... J. Wayne Clark  
     Judith J. Whitney  
     Louise T. Harding  
 MOUNT EAGLE CHRISTIAN CENTER ..... Martha D. CashBurluss  
 MOUNT UNION COLLEGE ..... Rockwell Jones  
 OHIO WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY ..... John A. Wilcher  
 METHODIST HEALTHCARE ..... Rick McKinnie  
 CHAPLAIN, TYSON ..... Rick McKinnie  
 METHODIST SEMINARY, METHODIST CHURCH  
 OF CHILE ..... Jacob F. Schaible  
 ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, ROGERS ..... Pamela Cicioni  
 CHAPLAIN, U.S. AIR FORCE ..... Ronald L. Feeser, Jr.  
 CHAPLAIN, U.S. NAVY ..... Scott J. Shafer  
 CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY ..... John C. Fimple  
 CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY ..... William Clint Black  
 CHAPLAIN, U.S. ARMY ..... David Carl Eaton  
 CRIME VICTIMS ADVOCACY ..... David Morgan  
 INDIANA WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY ..... Christopher T. Bounds  
 METHODIST NURSING HOME & VILLAGE ..... J. M. Rogers

## Wesley Foundation Directors

ARKANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY, JONESBORO ..... William Eric Van Meter  
 ARKANSAS TECH UNIVERSITY, RUSSELLVILLE ..... Jason A. Molitor  
 HENDERSON STATE UNIVERSITY/OUACHITA  
     Jessica Lee Durand  
 BAPTIST UNIVERSITY ..... James Mark Lasater  
 SOUTHERN ARKANSAS UNIVERSITY ..... John Palmer  
 UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL ARKANSAS, CONWAY ..... Omar H Al-Rikabi  
 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS, FAYETTEVILLE ..... Maxine Y. Allen  
 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT LITTLE ROCK ..... E. Kavan Dodson  
 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT MONTICELLO ..... Henry Wilkins  
 UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS AT PINE BLUFF

## Appointed in Other Annual Conference

KANSAS EAST CONFERENCE ..... Mark Norman  
 NEW MEXICO CONFERENCE ..... Robert Hunt  
 OKLAHOMA CONFERENCE ..... James H. Lenderman  
 MISSISSIPPI CONFERENCE ..... Ronald A. Kitchens  
 CENTRAL TEXAS CONFERENCE ..... L. Leonard Delony  
 TEXAS CONFERENCE ..... Gregg Louis Taylor

## Appointed to Attend School

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL ..... Andrew C. Thompson

## Diaconal Ministry

David Clemmons ..... David L. French  
 Jim Walsmith ..... John C. Yarrington  
 Denise E. Palmer

## Leave of Absence

Thomas Rhoades, Stephen Waggoner, Kay S. Wiggins, Sarah Mullins, Cheryl Jean Cook Baker, Thomas Mark Ashcraft, Donna Huie, Larry D. Ott, Mary Jane Pearce, Polly C. Shafer

## Incapacity Leave

Jenni Duncan, Marcia Dodd, Robert Bell, Rodney M. Patterson, David Michael O'Dell, Doyle E. Berckefeldt, Marion Fleming, Vernon Wayne Johnson, Ed Kerr, Gregory Webb, Billie Jean Tate, Rufus Robert Burnham, Jr., Floyd Ervin, Rita Kaye Hammett Evans, Larry Hunt, Sam A. Long, John R. Soward, Ronald W. Durham, Leslee Lynn Phillips, Betsy Singleton-Snyder, Virginia Sue Trexler, Louann Averitt Murphy, Cornelia DeLee, Lewis See, Dee Edwards

## Sabbatical

Tom Frase

## Honorable Location

Darrell Van Smith, Jon Mac Taylor, Cynthia Lee Davis, James Kenneth Dodd, Paul C. Draper, Rhonda K. Crow Monroe, Norman C. Moyer, Larry Wesley Pearce, Carey Don Womack, Donald W. Lanier, Jerry Keith Cookus, Marcia Crossman, Susan Elizabeth Gladin, Peter H. Kimball, Thomas Winborn Barnett, Charles Marcus Cooper, Constance Steele



Melissa Crutchfield addresses the Arkansas Annual Conference about the work the United Methodist Committee on Relief does overseas.







Married couple and pastors Jeff Warrick and Aubrietta Jones present their daughter, Daphne Grace Warrick, to be baptized by Bishop Charles Crutchfield as DeeDee Autry holds the order of worship.



The first night of worship at Annual Conference began with a procession of banners from churches throughout Arkansas.



Asa Whitaker, Arkansas Conference lay leader, gives his yearly address.



Harry T. Cross, Shane Pair and Bubba Smith, all United Methodist military chaplains, hold baskets of phone cards donated by Arkansas United Methodists to service members overseas.

To see more Annual Conference photos, go to [www.arumc.org](http://www.arumc.org). Watch for additional Annual Conference news and photos in the August issue.



Lynn Baker, Tony Hilliard, Charles Barnett and Bishop Charles Crutchfield burn the paid off note for Beal Lodge at Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton.



A member of Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church's Music and Arts Ministry in Little Rock dances during the church choir's anthem "I Give Myself Away" at Monday night worship of Annual Conference.



## COMING UP

First UMC El Dorado is rethinking its annual Adele MacFarlane Preaching Series. In its 30th year, the Adele MacFarlane Preaching Series will take place on three consecutive Friday evenings at 7:00 p.m., July 9, 16 and 23. "From the Steps...to the Streets," is the theme for this year's series which will take place on the steps of the church. A free cookout will take place at 6:00 p.m. prior to each service and free child care is available from 6:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m. the Guest preachers are Eric Van Meter and Andrea Allen. Music will be provided by a variety of bands, including the ASU Wesley Foundation and Sanctus from Russellville. Various bands will lead in worship including the worship band for the ASU Wesley Foundation and Sanctus from Russellville. FUMC El Dorado is located at 201 S. Hill Drive. For more information call 870-862-1341 or go to [www.fumceldorado.com](http://www.fumceldorado.com).

The Camp Meeting tradition lives on in several United Methodist Churches. The 112th Camp Meeting at Ben Few Campground is scheduled for July 16-25. The campground is located between Fordyce and Arkadelphia, off Highway 8. The preacher for this gathering is Larry Kelso, First UMC, Magnolia. John Moore and Kathleen Dockery will assist as song leader and pianist. Services will be held at 11:00 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. each day with local music groups performing just prior to worship. Daily special activities for adults and children are planned. For more information contact Bill Shirron, (501) 794-3522 or Charlotte Harrison (501) 455-0138

Ebenezer Camp Ground near Center Point will start its annual encampment with an 8:00 p.m. services July 23. Daily services will be held at 11:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m. through July 29. Paul McCoy, pastor at First United Methodist Church, Nashville will be the evangelist. Music will be provided by Brent Goff, Carolyn Carter, Marjorie Copeland and the Mineral Springs Choir and the Testimonies. The campground is coated off Highway 278, three miles north of Center Point. For more information contact Bob Lee, 501-922-3958 or [blee\\_72104@yahoo.com](mailto:blee_72104@yahoo.com)

Up to 600 people will attend the Davidson Campground gathering July 30 through August 8. Carlton Cross, pastor of Prescott First United Methodist will be the evangelist, assisted by Paul Shuffield and Jean Miller. Services are at 11 am and 7:45 pm each day with special events for children and youth. The Davidson Campground is located approximately 12 miles west of Arkadelphia on Highway 26.

For more information contact Blake Batson, 8700-246-9844 or go to [www.davidsoncampground.com](http://www.davidsoncampground.com)

The Holy Healthy Task Force of the Arkansas Conference is hosting a **Basic Preparation Parish Nurse Course** for Registered Nurses, Thursday, August 5 through Saturday, August 10 at Mount Eagle Retreat Center near Clinton, AR. Having a trained Parish Nurse in your congregation can help to promote health and wellness and also encourage healing and wholeness. Cost for the course is \$50 that includes course instruction and manual, lodging and meals. Registration is going on now at [www.mounteagle.org](http://www.mounteagle.org) or by calling 501-723-4580. For more information about Parish Nursing, visit [www.parishnurses.org](http://www.parishnurses.org). or by contacting Janice Sudbrink at (479) 782-5068 or [jsudbrink@fsfumc.org](mailto:jsudbrink@fsfumc.org).

Arkansas's annual **Worship Fair** is set for Friday-Saturday, August 13-14, St. Paul United Methodist Church in Little Rock. The theme for this year's event is "Making the Ordinary Extraordinary." Participants will learn to seek and find God in all situations and, particularly, to plan and perform meaningful worship and preaching during the "Ordinary Time" that stretches between Epiphany and Lent and between Pentecost and Advent. Clinicians include John Thornburg, Anna Laura Page, Gail Wells and Liz Wright. Pre-registration is recommended; there is a discount for those registering on or before July 15. For a registration form or for more information, go to [www.arkansasfumwa.org](http://www.arkansasfumwa.org) or contact chapter president Robert Armstrong at 870-772-4092 or [rca1950@swbell.net](mailto:rca1950@swbell.net). This event is sponsored by the Arkansas Chapter of the Fellowship together with the Arkansas Conference.

Interested parties are invited to **travel to the Holy Land with Bishop and Mrs. Charles Crutchfield, January 17-25, 2011.** The trip theme is "Jesus: His Life, His Time, His Land, His Hebrew Faith." Scheduled sites include Jerusalem, Galilee, Bethlehem, Jericho and many other places of significance during Jesus' ministry. Trip fee includes airfare, motor coaches, guided sightseeing, entrance fees, hotels, breakfast & dinner each day, online Bible study guide and a lecture series. Contact Karen Crutchfield at 501-224-2776 or [kcrutch@aol.com](mailto:kcrutch@aol.com) for information and a brochure.

## OBITUARIES

### JONESBORO

**Jesse A. Bruner**, 79, of Jonesboro died June 7, 2010 at the Fulton County Hospital in Salem. He was born Sept. 12, 1930, in Calhoun County, Miss., to Leroy V. and Mertie Poff Bruner. He was a graduate of Bay High School, Arkansas State University and Candler School of Theology, Emory University in Atlanta.

He was a Korean Campaign veteran, serving three years, nine months in the aviation branch of the U.S. Navy. He served 35 and a half years as a United Methodist clergyman, pastoring churches primarily in the North Arkansas United Methodist Annual Conference.

He was preceded in death by his parents; one son, Allan Kent Bruner; and one brother, Jimmy Bruner. He is survived by his wife, Venita F. Bruner of Ash Flat; one son, Greg Bruner of Cherokee Village; one daughter, Janice Louise Corter, of Mountain View; two sisters, Anna Leola Warren, of Bay, and Sharon Bourgeois of Bunker Hill, W.Va.; one brother, L.V. Bruner Jr. of Casa Grande, Ariz.; seven grandchildren, Jeremy, Katelyn and Callie Bruner, Chris Corter, Harrison, Luke and Evan Bruner; and one great-



**Jesse Bruner**

grandchild, Landon Corter. A memorial service was held June 10 at Cornerstone United Methodist Church in Jonesboro. Chris Cooper, Jeanne William and Kurt Boggan officiated. A graveside service followed at Oaklawn Cemetery.

The family requests memorials be made to Ozark Missions Project and Cornerstone United Methodist Church, 1910 Disciple Drive, Jonesboro 72401.

### VAN BUREN

**Archie N. Boyd**, 97, of Van Buren, Arkansas died, June 8, 2010 in Van Buren.

He was born at Lavaca, Arkansas. He finished grade school there and graduated from high school at Hartford, Arkansas. He held B.A. Degrees from John Brown University at Siloam Springs, Arkansas and Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas and a B.D. Degree from the School of Theology, Southern Methodist University.

He served as a Chaplain in the United States Air Force during World War II and the Korean Conflict. Reverend Boyd was a 33-degree Mason and served for two years as state Chaplain of the American Legion, and one year as Grand Chaplain of the Grand Masons in the state of Arkansas. He served for thirty-three years on the Board of Directors of the Methodist Village Nursing Home and also served as Chairman five times. Rev. Boyd was a reserved delegate to the South Central Jurisdictional Conference and, he also

served as Chairman of the committee that planned the Conference Council on Ministry.

He served as pastor of the following Methodist Churches; Associate Pastor of the Floral Heights Methodist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas; St. Paul Methodist, Fort Smith; First Methodist, Deport, Texas; Berryville Methodist, Berryville, ; Washington Avenue Methodist, North Little Rock; First Methodist at Wynne, where a new church building was erected during his ministry there; and First Methodist, Searcy. He then became District Superintendent of the Forrest City and Fort Smith Districts prior to his pastorate at Goddard United Methodist Church in Fort Smith, where he served for twelve years.

Funeral services were held at Roebuck Chapel, First United Methodist Church, Fort Smith Arkansas with burial following at Roselawn

He is preceded in death by his wife, Marie Boyd. He is survived by one son, Edward P. Boyd, of Van Buren, Arkansas, one grand daughter, Michelle Zimmerman and her husband Brandon, two great grandsons, Carter and Peyton Zimmerman and many nieces and nephews



**Archie Boyd**

## TRANSFORMING THE WORLD

From left, Billy Reeder, Becky Jackson and Emory and Jason Molitor present a \$6,000 check to "Mama Bishop" Nshimba Nkulu and Bishop Nkulu Ntanda Ntambo of the Democratic Republic



of Congo for the Bobby Jackson Memorial Wesley Foundation in Kamina, Congo. Several years ago, the students were instrumental in the launch of the Congo facility, named in memory of Becky Jackson brother, and committed to underwriting the salary of the director of the ministry. An additional \$800 was given by Lover's Lane United Methodist Church for other Kamina needs such as water wells.

RIGHT: Seventeen riders from the Wesley Foundation at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro and Grace United Methodist Church in Conway traveled 170 miles in four days recently for the annual Tour De Faith. The trip combines a love of cycling with mission work. The group performed tasks in Robeson County, North Carolina, one of the poorest areas in the United States. The trip focus is on service and spiritual renewal.





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# REPORTER

THE UNITED METHODIST

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Eager to help

Methodists known for giving to others | 7B

Section B

July 2, 2010



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTO/DAVE MARTIN

Oil from the leaking oil rig is seen swirling through the currents in the Gulf of Mexico as it heads toward shore.

## Oil spill prompts church response

BY MALLORY MCCALL  
Staff Writer

Swinson Schipman, a longtime, faithful member of First United Methodist Church in Pensacola, Fla., has missed more than a few worship services and choir practices in recent months. That's because he's been taped up in a Tyvek protective suit while skimming oil sheen, tar balls and coagulated oil from the ocean's surface in the Gulf of Mexico.

Mr. Schipman's duties as a shipmate on a 37-foot charter fishing boat changed drastically when British Petroleum's (BP) Deepwater Horizon drilling rig exploded April 20, killing 11 workers and leaking between 66 and 120 million gallons of oil into the Gulf.

"The waters are closed," said Mr. Schipman. "We can't fish now."

The spill is already six times the

size of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill off the Alaska coast—and is still growing. It's devastated Gulf Coast tourism as well as the real estate, fishing and deep-sea drilling industries.

BP hired and trained crews from Mr. Schipman's boat, the Nothin' Matters, and other local charter boats to assist in the cleanup process. The boat's crew works from sunrise to sundown, corralling oil within a 5-mile distance from the shoreline between Orange Beach, Ala., and Pensacola Beach, Fla., about a 30-mile stretch.

"Sometimes you have good days and sometimes you have bad," said Mr. Schipman. "Right now, the oil really hasn't coated the beach yet, so we really feel like we're doing some good."

It's hard work, says Mr. Schipman. Some of the oil masses have the consistency of mayonnaise and can weigh

## Q&A: Seeing grace at work in our small churches

At 35, the Rev. Jason Byassee has an impressive resume. A United Methodist elder, he has been an assistant editor at *The Christian Century* and is now executive director of Leadership

See related commentary, 7B

Education and director of the Center for Theology, Writing and Media at Duke University Divinity School.

Yet Dr. Byassee says in his new book, *The Gifts of the Small Church* (Abingdon), that the two years he spent in a rural pastorate may be the best thing he's done in his career. He spoke recently with managing editor Robin Russell.

**This book, you say, is your reaction to how small churches are being talked about. Explain.**

There's an appropriate enthusiasm for growing and strengthening larger churches—they provide leadership in the connection, they nurture some of our best future pastors—but often that praise comes at the expense of running down small churches and feeling annoyed that Methodism has so many small churches. I wanted to not to be romantic about it but still praise the place small churches play in our church and society.

■ See 'Grace' page 2B



Jason Byassee



PHOTO BY CHIEF MASS COMMUNICATION SPECIALIST JOE KANE/U.S. NAVY

Miles of floating barriers are put in place around Mobile Bay and other sites in the Gulf of Mexico to protect the coastline from a growing oil slick approaching the area from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

■ See 'Spill' page 4B



## FAITH WATCH

**Va. Conference joins anti-tobacco campaign**

The Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church and the United Church of Christ endorsed on June 17 Faith United Against Tobacco, a campaign to reduce smoking nationwide. A resolution in Virginia calls for increasing the state tobacco tax, funding prevention programs and making all workplaces smoke-free. "The faith community can be a powerful force in protecting our children and reducing the terrible toll of tobacco," organizers say on the site, [www.tobaccofreekids.org](http://www.tobaccofreekids.org).

**Pope asks forgiveness for clergy sex abuse**

Pope Benedict XVI begged forgiveness for sexual abuse by Catholic priests during a June 11 speech at the Vatican. Addressing some 15,000 priests gathered for an event, he also pledged to do "everything possible to ensure that such abuse will never occur again." A group advocating for victims said the pope's words were not enough. "Forgiveness comes after, not during, a crisis," Barbara Blaine, president of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests (SNAP), said in a statement.

**SBC opposes repeal of 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell'**

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) passed a resolution June 16 opposing the repeal of the U.S. military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy on gays and lesbians serving in the military. "It is the seasoned judgment of most military leaders that normalizing the open presence of homosexuals in the military is incompatible with generating, strengthening and maintaining good discipline, unit cohesion and combat readiness," the resolution stated.

**Religious groups see slight drop in giving**

Religious groups across the U.S. reported a slight decrease in donations last year, according to a study by Giving USA Foundation. Religious donations dropped 0.7 percent in 2009, in contrast to a 5.5 percent increase in 2008; but donations still exceeded \$100 billion for the third year in a row.

**GRACE Continued from page 1B**

"The small church," you write, "is where God's doing the interesting stuff, if we have the patience to see it." Tell me what God is doing there.

One of the things I like about small churches is that you can't avoid the person you dislike. They're right there, every time you're there, and there's nowhere to hide from them. Some of this comes from my being influenced by [Archbishop of Canterbury] Rowan Williams, to see the enemy by whom you're agitated as the person through whom Christ is working on you, developing in you patience and maybe eventually the kind of love that marks God's love for us.

I spent a couple of years in graduate school worshipping in Duke Chapel. One of the reasons I loved going there is I didn't have to see anyone I knew and no one would notice if I wasn't there. That turned out to be a good thing for a transitional period, but it's not really the optimal way to do church. Church ought to be a place where they notice and ask why you're not there.

And as aggravating and annoying as that can be—to have people in your business—it's also what makes human life worth living.

**But some are saying now that we just can't afford the upkeep of all these small United Methodist churches. What's your response?**

Methodism has been marked by having lots of small churches. The lifeblood of small communities is often churches like the ones I talk about. So I want to sort of flip the accusation and say we can't afford as Methodists *not* to have strong, small churches.

No one would want to be an advocate for weak, small churches. I'm applauding congregations that are strong in the sense of being open to others,

trying to grow, to reach out in their community, to do service, to seek out the lost.

**Are churches that stay small somehow failing in their task?**

One tendency I want to resist is a description of smallness as a mark of faithfulness: If you're not small, that means you're not preaching a difficult gospel; you should be running people off, and if you're not it means you're not being faithful. That's part of what I'm *not* saying.

Strong, larger churches are crucial to our connection. But I think successful larger churches are often a collec-

tion of smaller ones. Some of the Methodist genius has gone to places like Willow Creek, which wouldn't be big if it weren't for small groups. The only way it makes sense is if someone *does* notice if you're not there. So it's a kind of collection of a thousand small groups. That's the Methodist genius: to grow and multiply, but to do it with people who

not only know your name but who are also going to ask whether you sinned that week. And the best approximation we have of that in Methodism is these small congregations.

**You say the United Methodist system is "rigged" to keep churches small. How so?**

We do have a little bit of a wandering spirit in Methodism that comes from itineracy: If we've been someplace for three years, it's time to start looking around. I like this trend we have, though, of longer pastorates. Small communities are used to someone coming in saying they're going to do something remarkable and then skipping town—just like their children did. There has to be a sense that you're willing to commit to life to-

gether before there's a whole lot of opening up for your own contribution to it.

**You mention that your generation is seeing that something is lost in American mobility and the idea that bigger is better. What appeal do small churches have for Gen-X and younger adults?**

What I think is lost is layered, multi-generational community. People my age have no one with whom they're in regular relationship who's old. There's a wisdom there, the loss of which is tragic and it makes you forget who you are. I hope I'm generalizing correctly when I say people in my generation realize we've lost something and are looking for surrogate grandparents. I know that's what I was doing in that church.

**We also just need community in general, it seems. There's a certain appeal to being more anonymous in a megachurch versus being in a small church—where, as you say, "Our stuff was in one another's faces." But can we really do church without knowing others and being known?**

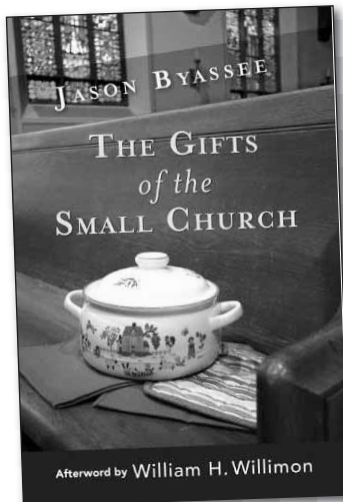
When I was attending Duke Chapel, it was a really difficult time in my life, when I would go to church and just cry. I didn't want anyone to see that. I wanted to be able to do that

community is a tremendous gift. But [Bishop] Will Willimon wrote a book about the small church almost a generation ago and said he wished he had paid more attention to the neuroses in such places and not come off as simply cheerleading for them. So I felt had to tell the truth about how people there can be difficult.

The thing is, people everywhere can be difficult. In slicker communities we have better strategies for avoiding the difficulties. Some of the people with whom I had more friction are also some of the people from whom I learned more. There's just something embodied and incarnational about not rubbing down the hard edges on people.

**In the book's afterword, Bishop Willimon criticizes the small church as having a stronghold on the denomination and for its "insufferable pettiness and maddening small-spiritedness." Why include that?**

Some of that is my journalistic time at *The [Christian] Century*, where if you're going to make a strong claim, you should seek out someone with a different claim and let that one be heard, too. I knew Will's current trajectory: numbers or bust. And I knew my book would push in the other direction. I felt like it would be a good thing for people to hear that in the



'One of the things I like about small churches is that you can't avoid the person you dislike. They're right there, every time you're there, and there's nowhere to hide from them.'

and to be ignored. If anything, it made people feel awkward and they would get up and move. But you can't do that in a small congregation and not have somebody asking after you. I think that's finally the more human way to be.

There's a venerable Christian tradition around seeking out periods of solitude—either a pilgrimage or retreat, or monastic communities. But the pull of the tradition is for leaving space for that so that you can then come back to community feeling refreshed. Basil the Great in the fourth century said, "If you live alone whose feet will you wash?"

**You also acknowledge ways smaller churches can be parochial and inward, with chapters on misguided patriotism and longstanding racism.**

One of the things I worry about is I hope the people I write about feel honored more than belittled. I tried to say that being a pastor in such a com-

pages of the book. So I hope Will and I together are modeling the conversation about Methodism in ways that people can see what we're saying and how we're doing it.

**Anything else you'd like to add?**

Part of what I'm wrestling with is the tension between itineracy as a way to be nimble in response to the Spirit, and stability as a gift of the Spirit that says if you really want to grow roots you have to stay awhile. In my own life there was a tension, because I loved that place but we couldn't afford to live there on what they could pay us. And yet as [Bishop] Willimon pointed out, a church that size could have never gotten somebody with the kind of training I had at Duke without the big churches that subsidize it.

I'm trying to enter into a thicket of tensions and not solve them, but say that it's in such places that God seems to dispense grace to us.

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THE UNITED METHODIST  
**REPORTER**

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THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER (USPS954-500) is published weekly by UMR Communications Inc., 1221 Profit Drive, Dallas, Texas 75247-3919. Periodicals postage paid at Dallas, Texas and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER, PO Box 660275, Dallas Texas 75266-0275.

THE UNITED METHODIST REPORTER has provided denominational news coverage since its beginning as the Texas Methodist newspaper in 1847. The Reporter has no official ties to the United Methodist General Conference or to any of the denomination's general boards or agencies. This newspaper aims to provide readers with a broad spectrum of information and viewpoints consistent with the diversity of Christians.

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## UM CONNECTIONS

**Resources available for special needs**

Naomi Mitchum, special needs coordinator at Chapelwood United Methodist Church in Houston, Texas, and former chairperson of the Texas Conference committee on disability concerns has posted resources online to help churches serve people with disabilities in emergency situations. Visit [naomimitchum.com](http://naomimitchum.com) and go to Church Environment in the special needs section.

**Historic young-adult ministry back in action**

The Epworth League, a global association for young adults in the United Methodist Church that existed from 1889 to 1939, has restarted. The League is designed to help people from ages 18 to 35 find their purpose and develop their Christian character. The global Epworth League organization is sponsored by Pleasant Valley United Methodist Church in Wisconsin. For information, visit [www.epworthleague.org](http://www.epworthleague.org).

**Church development gathering scheduled**

The annual School of Congregational Development (SCD), sponsored by the General Board of Discipleship, Path 1 and the General Board of Global Ministries, will be July 29-Aug. 2 in Nashville, Tenn. Bishops, district superintendents, conference leaders, pastors and laity will gather for workshops on teaching, creating new ministries and leader development. Plenary and worship leaders include: Bishop Dick Wills of the Tennessee Conference; the Rev. Sharma Lewis of Wesley Chapel UMC in McDonough, Ga.; the Rev. Sam Park of Community Church at Holliston in Pasadena, Calif.; David Owens, faculty director of the Professional Development Institute at Vanderbilt University; the Rev. Rudy Rasmus of St. John's Downtown Church in Houston; the Rev. Dottie Escobedo-Frank, of Cross-Roads UMC in Phoenix; and Tony Campolo, author and professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Penn. Register online at [www.scdumc.org](http://www.scdumc.org).

# UM churches struggle with debt load

BY ERIK ALSGAARD AND  
LINDA BLOOM  
*United Methodist News Service*

The U.S. housing crisis has filtered down to United Methodist congregations.

A new report shows that the congregational debt load of local churches rose from approximately \$260 to \$420 per member between 2000 and 2007, growing about 6 percent faster than the annual inflation rate.

"The United Methodist Church tracks the major demographics of the nation," said the Rev. Stan Sutton, treasurer of the denomination's West Ohio Conference. "The country took on a whole lot of debt in housing; the church took on a whole lot of debt, too."

Since then, Mr. Sutton said, the level of debt has started to drop. But indebtedness has affected the ability of some congregations to pay their apportionments for the denomination's mission work.

Mr. Sutton is a member of the Sustainability Advisory Group, a group of volunteers from 15 of the denomination's conferences and staff at the General Council on Finance and Administration and Board of Pension and Health Benefits. Their report examining the church's short- and long-term financial challenges was released in May.

Overall, the report suggests some tough solutions may be necessary to help the denomination remain financially viable as membership continues to decline. Such solutions range from eliminating clergy job guarantees to closing and selling "unsustainable" churches to revamping clergy and lay pension plans.

Mr. Sutton used statistics on local church indebtedness from his own conference to extrapolate a trend for the U.S. church. "I found in West Ohio that we had, over the last decade or more, growth in debt—aggregate debt—more than health care," he said. "Health care costs grew 8.1 percent; debt grew at 8.6 percent."

From 2000 to 2007, the report said, the amount churches paid in principal and interest on debts rose from \$400 million to more than \$600 million, representing almost 12 percent of total local church expenditures.

**A little or a lot**

The situation isn't quite as bad as it seems.

"When you look across the statistics, you see that it's not that 35,000 churches have taken on a little debt; it's that a few churches have taken on a lot of debt," Mr. Sutton said.

Churches sometimes overreach on their debt accumulation, which can



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY MIKE DUBOSE

**A new report recommends careful debt analysis for church building projects.**

lead to a loss of flexibility, said Lonnie Chafin, treasurer of the Northern Illinois Conference and a member of the advisory group.

"A third of our churches [in the Northern Illinois Conference] have debt," he added. "Of that third, every church has a financial crisis in the first seven years of having a mortgage."

During that first seven years, a church may underpay its apportionments to the mission and ministry of the general church, Mr. Chafin said.

The Sustainability Advisory Group report found that debt levels "appear to be inversely related" to a local church's financial support of the de-

nomination's connexional ministries.

In 2007, the more than 20,000 churches that paid 95 percent to 100 percent of their apportionments to the general church had an average debt of \$476 per congregant.

For the more than 8,000 churches paying less than 95 percent, the debt figure was more than 50 percent higher—\$721 per church member.

**Bad decisions**

Bad real estate choices can lead to financial pitfalls, Mr. Chafin pointed out.

"Because we had folks making real estate decisions who were sometimes doing this for the first time, deciding

the where, how big, how to pull it off—we've made some very big, expensive, bad decisions," he said.

One solution may lie in the approval process for such deals. The advisory group is recommending that the *Book of Discipline*, the denomination's law book, be amended to require approval of local church loans by the annual conference itself, rather than just a district of the conference.

The group also suggests the denomination establish a debt analysis training initiative for churches and district boards of church location and building, and distribute a debt analysis process across the connection.

The Texas Methodist Foundation has created a model for the analysis process. "It's the sort of thing that a shrewd banker would use—do the financial analysis and ask the question, 'What is a reasonable amount of debt for the church to take on?'" Mr. Sutton said.

Such tools are needed to sustain a church's financial future. "Right now, the process is the church thinks it's a great idea to go into debt," Mr. Sutton said. "The district superintendent approves because the church wants to grow. The district committee approves it because they want the church to grow."

"So there's a payoff for the pastor, there's a payoff for the D.S., and there's a payoff for the committee. The problem comes when the church has so much debt it can't do anything else."

**Mr. Alsgaard is a freelance writer and clergy member of the Detroit Conference. Ms. Bloom is a UMC news writer.**

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■ **SPILL** Continued from page 1B

a couple hundred pounds. The skimming crew uses “sausage booms,” shovels and stick-free mats to fish out the globs of oil. They wear two pairs of gloves and tall rubber boots taped over their protective suits, and in the Florida heat they can only work in their protective gear for 15 minutes at time before having to take a break and cool off.

“Every day is a new experience because it’s something no one has dealt with before,” said Mr. Schipman. “There’s no manual that tells you how to do these things. You got to crawl before you walk, and we’re just doing what we can do.”

**Churches react**

United Methodist churches near the Gulf are frustrated with the extent of the oil spill—and the fact that members can’t volunteer without going through extensive training to become Hazmat-certified—the safety training required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for people handling, transporting or even preparing paper work for hazardous materials.

“We can’t have a day when the church congregation goes out to clean up the beach,” says Mr. Schipman. “We are not there yet.”

“There are times we feel helpless, but that’s where prayer comes in,” adds the Rev. Geoffrey Lentz, associate pastor of First United Methodist Church in Pensacola, Fla.

At the Alabama-West Florida Annual Conference event, Bishop Paul Leeland asked everyone to turn to the person next to them and spend a few moments praying for the oil spill disaster unfolding in the Gulf of Mexico.

“As the days have unfolded, each of us has watched the news that has continued to increase our anxiety and uncertainty about the impact of this disaster on our environment and our people,” Bishop Leeland said. “This is the time for us to be the Church and not give into despair.”

Some United Methodist churches have hosted prayer vigils where people of all denominations and faith traditions were invited to pray for the Gulf and its people. Others have organized services of healing for creation and the community, and still others have posted suggestions for a more sustainable, environmentally conscious lifestyle on their church websites.

According to the United Methodist Church’s Social Principles, the church has a responsibility to place a high priority on change in economic, political, social and technological lifestyles to support a more ecologically just and sustainable world, ultimately leading to a higher quality of life for all of God’s creation.

“I believe the terrible crisis in the Gulf of Mexico demonstrates the relevance of God’s renewed creation,” said Florida Bishop Timothy Whitaker, who chairs the Council of Bishop’s *God’s Renewed Creation: Call to Hope and Action* task force.

A couple of years ago, Bishop Whitaker said, it was difficult to get churches to respond to the call for creation care. But now he feels certain the spewing pump of petroleum and its ecological and economical consequences will get people’s attention.

“Our responsibility in this area is not peripheral, but central,” said Bishop Whitaker. “The God we worship created it all and has invited us to help take care of it.”

**Louisiana’s response**

The Louisiana Conference of the United Methodist Church’s Disaster Response Ministry is determined to offer relief to the coastal communities still recovering from the damage of Hurricanes Katrina, Rita, Gustav and Ike, and are now



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE U.S. NAVY

**An oil containment boom deployed by U.S. Navy Supervisor of Salvage and Diving personnel surrounds New Harbor Island, La., to mitigate environmental damage from the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. Deepwater Horizon was an ultra-deepwater oil rig that sank April 22, causing a massive oil spill threatening the U.S. Gulf Coast.**

faced with the fear of losing their marshlands, estuaries, animal life and possibly their jobs.

But the conference’s typical response for hurricane and flood relief does not necessarily apply to this situation.

“It’s much easier to gut a home and rebuild a home compared to what we are facing now,” said the Rev. Darryl Tate, executive director of the disaster response ministry. “This is territory that has never been plowed.”

Disaster Response staff members recently met with pastors and laity from the three Louisiana communities that have been hit the hardest—Buras, Dulac and Grand Isle—to learn how they could help. Pastors said first and foremost they are seeking to provide spiritual and emotional care for the families and workers.

The conference plans to send ministers who are certified in crisis counseling, volunteer teams to host Vacation Bible Schools and translators fluent in Vietnamese, Cambodian and Spanish to help communicate with immigrant fishing communities.

At the Louisiana Annual Conference event, clergy and laity also assembled 6,000 devotional kits, which included New Testaments and copies of *The Upper Room* donated by the General Board of United Methodist Men. The kits were sent home with local church pastors from Buras, Dulac and Grand Isle and handed out to the workers and community.

“We take Mr. Wesley’s ‘the world is our parish’ to be our mandate and want to help ‘the least, the last, the lost,’” said Mr. Tate.

Churches and Disaster Response are doing what they can, but feel limited in the ways they can help. Until the oil spill is declared a national disaster, the area cannot get the government resources it really needs.

Conference leaders are praying for direction, raising funds to hire case managers and encouraging people to support the Gulf Coast Civic Work Act, which would provide job-training opportunities and increase employment to aid in the recovery of the Gulf Coast region.

“This is every bit as dramatic as any hurricane, and when the hurricane resides, we rebuild,” said the Rev. Milton Gutierrez, district superintendent for the Dallas South District of the North Texas Conference, who was instrumental in helping with relief efforts following 2005

hurricanes along the Gulf. “But this hasn’t resided, and we can’t rebuild a marsh.”

Louisiana does not have beaches; its marshes act as a buffer between the Gulf and the City of New Orleans. Should the spreading oil kill the swamp, the city would be unprotected, making it even more vulnerable to flooding and hurricanes.

“This blatant disregard for ecology is as much as an accident as drunk driving,” said Mr. Gutierrez. “The industrial carelessness is criminal.”

**Making an effort**

Even landlocked churches are making an effort to help the Gulf.

Linda Steele, a member of First United Methodist Church in Bryant, Ark., is collecting nylon pantyhose for the cause. She saw a segment on the news about a non-profit, ecological organization called Matter of Trust that is collecting pantyhose and hair clippings—both animal and human—to make oil-absorbing booms to send to the Gulf Coast.

“It’s such a great way to use resources that would otherwise end up in the landfill,” said Ms. Steele.

Although she has decided to leave the hair collecting up to the local salons and pet groomers, she has asked the women of Bryant FUMC to ditch their nylons for the summer and instead donate them to cleanup efforts.

Matter of Trust’s natural-fiber recycling mobilization is proving to be successful. Thousands of volunteers are signing up for “stocking stuffer” parties and “Boom-B-Qs” where they fill the legs of the hose with hair scraps. The homemade booms are then sent to one of the 19 donated warehouses located throughout Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida.

Within the last month, enough materials have been collected to make 25 miles of oil-absorbing boom. Matter of Trust volunteers are now concentrating on booming and deploying in hopes of making more room in the warehouses. So far, 10 miles’ worth has been stuffed. For information, visit [www.matteroftrust.org](http://www.matteroftrust.org).

As for Mr. Schipman, he’s willing to try anything—hair booms, bigger skimmer equipment and especially prayer.

“I pray a lot. What else can we do?”

[mmccall@umr.org](mailto:mmccall@umr.org)

**Facts about the Gulf**

- The Gulf of Mexico has 1,631 miles of coastline and over 16,000 miles of shoreline (including bays and inland waterways).
- Nearly half of all U.S. coastal wetlands—over 5 million acres—are located along the Gulf.
- The coastal plains of the western Gulf are used by nearly all of the migratory land bird species of the eastern U.S., as well as many western species.
- From New Orleans seafood restaurants to Florida vacation rentals, the Gulf’s annual tourism industry is estimated at over \$100 billion.
- The Gulf is home to four of the top seven fishing ports in the United States and seven of the top 10 seaports.
- The Gulf is home to an estimated 45,000 bottlenose dolphins.
- The Gulf waters are home to 73 percent of the shrimp and 59 percent of the oysters harvested in the U.S. each year and a total of 1.3 billion pounds of seafood valued at over \$650 million.

—Sources: Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, USA Today

**Oil, gas exploration**

- One-fourth of U.S. domestic natural gas and one-eighth of U.S. oil is extracted from the Gulf.
- The offshore oil and gas industry employs 55,000 workers in the Gulf.
- In 2006, the offshore rigs extracted 470 million barrels of oil.
- Dollars spent by BP on clean up: \$17.5 million/day.
- BP profits (1st quarter 2010): \$93 million/day and market value: \$156.2 billion.
- Punitive damages for 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill: \$1 billion (settled in 2009, reduced from original \$5 billion).
- Exxon profits: \$19.42 billion in 2009, \$45.2 billion in 2008.

—Sources: Minerals Management Service, Environmental Protection Agency, The Washington Post, Fortune



Swinson Schipman (left) and John Anthony (right), crew on Task Force 4, a near shore surface skimmer, suit up for a day’s work off the coast of Pensacola Beach, Fla.





PHOTOS BY BETTY BACKSTROM/LOUISIANA CONFERENCE

ABOVE: The Rev. Dave Carlton (right) offers encouragement to Tony Frickey, a manager for the Venice (La.) Port Complex. LEFT: Idled shrimp boats line the harbor in Buras, La.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MATTER OF TRUST

ABOVE: Volunteers in the Gulf area have contributed 10 miles of hair booms, made of nylons stuffed with hair, fur, fleece and feathers, to help soak up oil. BELOW: A volunteer holds up a hair boom that has soaked up oil along Alabama's coast. Booms also can be used to gently absorb oil on beaches.



COAST GUARD PHOTO BY LT. COMDR. PAUL ROONEY

Vessels conduct controlled burns on June 13 that are part of a coordinated federal, state and local effort to minimize the amount of oil in the water near the Deepwater Horizon oil spill site in the Gulf of Mexico. Approximately 1.17 million gallons of total dispersant have been deployed.



Jaden M. Kifer, a trained bird rescue worker, holds an oiled pelican while Ricardo A. Fernandez measures the bird's level of oiling June 12 at the Oiled Wildlife Triage center in Grand Isle in Louisiana. Birds are then transported to Fort Jackson, Fla., for cleaning, rehabilitation and release.

COAST GUARD PHOTO BY PETTY OFFICER CALEB CRITCHFIELD



# Making dreams of authentic living come true

BY BILLY REEDER  
*Special Contributor*

It's been almost a year to the day that I pulled my chainsaw out of my truck and walked into the Ozark National Forest. I had a salvage permit to log some trees that a recent tornado had knocked down. I was going to build the log cabin that I had wanted to build for years but had never gotten around to starting.

The hardest force to overcome is inertia.

If you pay any attention to the world of marketing you'll notice that we are bombarded with the world of faux. Whether it's the fake hardwood floor you're snapping into place in your house or the fruit drink that's full of artificial flavoring, we are told that if something looks like the real thing then it's as good as the real thing. It's not.

I had spent years writing and dreaming about the life I wanted, but if I honestly examined my life, I hadn't done much to actually pursue it. I had done a lot to make my life look like the dream, but in many ways it was simply a façade.

It felt as authentic as the faux leather that's now terribly cracked on my recliner. The mason jars I use as drinking glasses may or may not be from vegetables that I actually grew and canned. My current house looks like a log cabin, but it's really not. It's just log siding. It could just as easily have been bricked.

All of these things are good and serving their purposes, but I simply felt like something was still off balance. Me.

Shane Claiborne writes, "Most good things have already been said far too many times, and just need to be lived."

It was in this place that I had a choice to not only take up a pen and start a new chapter of my story, but also a hammer and nail. I could continue to fill my days with hours in front of a computer writing about this ideal or I could actually start living on my terms. If I wanted a log cabin, I had better find some trees and sharpen my saw.

## Art of living well

The plan was simple: build from scratch and without debt a small log cabin on the family farm—simple, efficient, practical, beautiful and strong. Once completed, sell our existing house and get rid of the junk cluttering our lives. Finally, relearn the art of living well. Grow more of my own food. Laugh more. Write original songs that tell God and everybody what I really think. Give more. Waste less. Learn how to smoke meat. Have more friends over for dinner.

As ridiculous as creating my own personal Walden seemed on the surface, deep down it felt like the only thing that really made any sense at all. In a world that is constantly pushing for bigger, faster, complicated and fake, I sought smaller, slower, simple and real.

I spent last summer logging and milling the trees on my portable sawmill. By the time that massive chore was done, it was time to start prepping for the upcoming school year. Once classes had begun and the weather had cooled, I began putting it all together during weekends, as time and money allowed. Slowly and deliberately.

Another school year has passed. I'm off again for the summer and I've devoted myself to long days back on the cabin. There are mornings I wake up with sore muscles and a sun-



COURTESY PHOTOS

**Billy Reeder says building a log cabin from scratch has been a way for him to live more authentically and to find better life balance.**

burned neck from long days working in the heat, but it's getting closer. It's taking the shape of the dream.

I've heard it said that joy doesn't change us. It's only through hard times and conflict that we feel compelled to look inside ourselves for something better and stronger. I can tell you that working in the summer heat doesn't hold the nostalgia of a Cracker Barrel Country Store and nothing happens fast. It's hot, it can be frustrating and I've lost count of the smashed fingers, cuts, bug bites and blood lost over the year.

But I can tell you that I've also spent a lot of hours working alongside old friends who have volunteered to come out and work with me for a day. I appreciate the shade, a good fan and cold water. I see a lot of sunsets and hear choirs of frogs in the fading light. I get to chat with curious onlookers and scratch the head of my horse, who likes to stick her head in the window and watch the progress.

My hands are rougher and stronger, and my head is clearer. But that's not all that has changed.

## Investing in life

I don't work for the church anymore. I teach at the local university, and I get to spend a lot of time mentoring a younger generation and hours listening to them tell me about things that matter in their lives. Sometimes we talk about school, sometimes relationships, sometimes faith.

At the house, there's always someone coming over for dinner. My wife, Paula, always has something amazing on the stove or in the oven and I can smoke a pork loin or rack of ribs that will leave you singing praises to heaven. We chase each other around the house with Nerf guns, and sometimes on winter nights we turn off the lights, sit in the glowing light of the fireplace, quietly talking as oak logs crackle down to embers.

'Thoreau went to the woods to live deliberately . . . I think I'm starting to understand.'

I've written some original songs and get to play them with a really great band. We are helping with an incredible new church start and are having a blast. My faith has turned back toward the God of the sunsets and laughter and less about the organizational health of a denomination and its theological disputes.

The day in 2008 that I bottomed out, I took a picture of myself. I wanted to remember my expression. I wanted to remember what it felt like that day. I wanted to remember the

pain and frustration. But more than that, I wanted to remember the roads that led me to that place, so that I might remember my bearings and not travel that way again by my own foolishness.

## Reclaiming balance

I still have much work to do. And the more time I spend with a hammer means the less I spend with a pen—though I do have a bit of a cult following on the cabin's progress via Facebook.

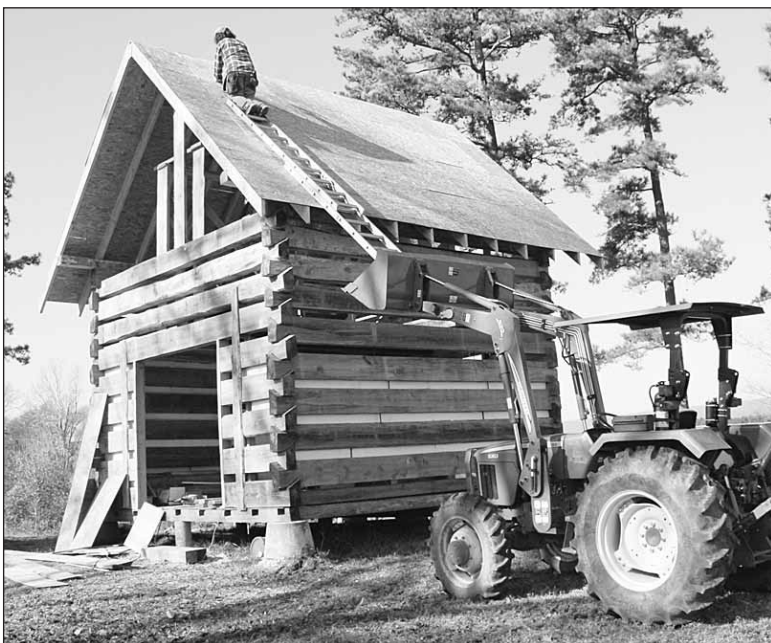
After the cabin, there is need of a new workshop, gardens to plant and barns to repair. Ultimately I hope to reclaim a balance of physical labor and writing, but writing less about the things I hope will come to be and more about things I have discovered through experience.

This journey is far from over.

I closed every entry of a previous blog with the words "Delibrio Animosus," which means "live a deliberate and vibrant life." Thoreau went to the woods to live deliberately and to suck out the marrow of life. I think I'm starting to understand.

But in the meantime . . . live well, laugh often and love always. Delibrio Animosus.

**Mr. Reeder, a former Arkansas Conference communications director, is now an assistant professor of multimedia and broadcast journalism at Arkansas Tech University.**



**Building this log cabin on his family's farm helped Billy Reeder to relearn the art of living well.**



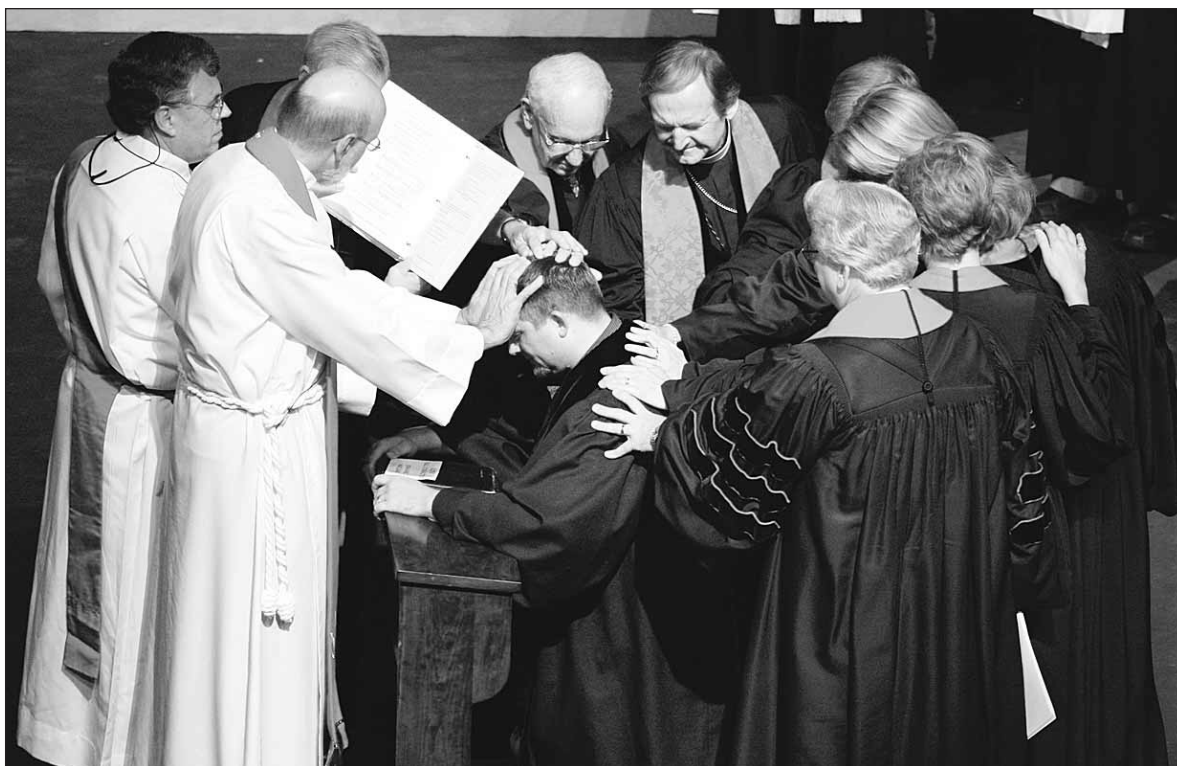


PHOTO BY ARMANDO RODRIGUEZ

New clergy members are ordained at the 2009 Florida Annual Conference. Effectiveness of clergy should be determined by growth in church membership, says Bishop Will Willimon.

## Count effectiveness by numbers

BY BISHOP WILLIAM WILLIMON  
*Special Contributor*

How do we Methodists define effective clergy? We do it with one word: growth. Effective clergy know how to grow the church in its membership, witness and mission.

In North Alabama, we now have a "Conference Dashboard" that every church logs in on Monday and reports their numbers for that Sunday's attendance, baptisms, professions of faith, offering and mission.

The pushback we have received has surprised me. In nearly every group of clergy where I've discussed our work, someone always repeats one of these mindless mantras: "It's all about numbers is it?" "You can't measure clergy effectiveness, can you?" "So it's come to this: putting the butts in the pews."

Yada, yada, yada.

There may be something to be said for these slogans. Except not in the United Methodist Church. We're Wesleyans. We believe in the growth of the kingdom of God.

John Wesley had friction with the established church of his day, not only because of his vibrant Trinitarian theology, but also because of his refusal to limit his ministry to the moribund English parochial system.

From the beginning, Methodists were inveterate numbers-keepers.

[Duke Divinity School professor]



**Bishop  
William  
Willimon**

Dick Heitzenrater tells me that in the annual minutes of British Methodism, beginning in 1769, the Circuits with fewer members than the previous year were marked with an asterisk. That year, it was 12 of the 48 Circuits. By 1779, that number had expanded to 18.

The question was asked at the conference, "How can we account for the decrease in so many Circuits this year?" The answer: This was "chiefly to the increase of worldly-mindedness and conformity to the world."

As of 1781, Wesley marked with an asterisk those Circuits that had an increase in membership, which was the case with 32 of them, or exactly half. This method was used for a few years until the percentage of Circuits that experienced increases in membership was 75 percent of the connection.

### Collecting statistics

Our North Alabama Conference once had four full-time people who spent their whole day collecting numbers from our churches. These numbers were duly reported and printed in the conference *Journal*.

Yet here's the thing: Not one single decision was ever made by the bishop or cabinet on the basis of these numbers! Of course, when the numbers were as bad as ours—over half our congregations had not made a new Christian in the past three years, a 20 percent decrease in membership—it takes courage to note the numbers.

Wesley frequently cites numerical growth as indicative of spiritual vitality. In his sermon "On God's Vineyard," he celebrates the London Methodist Society's growth from 12 to 2,200 in just about 25 years. Dr. Heitzenrater

speculates that Wesley was trying to spur them on, since their membership had slowed to only 400 new members in the latest 25 years.

Wesley sent pastors to those areas where, in his estimate, there were the most souls to be saved. He told his traveling preachers not just that they ought to read but also put a number on it: at least five hours a day.

### Rendering account

Wesley also kept a close eye on how much money was collected each year—for Kingswood School, for new preaching houses, for the pension fund, for operating expenses. The Annual Conference was invented not just as opportunity for worship and fellowship but for the purpose of everyone rendering account and confessing their numbers.

I can't speak for other church families. But in the Wesleyan family, studied obliviousness to results, deploying pastors without regard to their fruitfulness, pastors shrinking churches, pastors keeping house among the older folks left there by the work of a previous generation of pastors, and churches having a grand old time loving one another and praising God without inviting, seeking and saving those outside the church, do not make for faithfulness.

"Numbers aren't important." Really? Tell that to Jesus and his parables of growth and fruitfulness. Tell it to the Acts of the Apostles.

Tell it to John Wesley.

**Bishop Willimon leads the Birmingham (Ala.) Area. Reprinted from the North Alabama Conference website.**

## REFLECTIONS

# A word of thanks for selfless UM volunteers

BY BISHOP WOODIE W. WHITE  
*UMR Columnist*

Whatever else might be said of United Methodists, they are generous in responding to the needs of others.

Whenever the church has asked for help with disaster relief within the United States or outside of it, United Methodist congregations, both large and small, have responded with generosity and caring.

As I travel across the country—from rural areas to inner cities—I am not surprised to discover that United Methodist congregations are among the most involved in local community ministries. It has been particularly interesting to observe that while so many in these communities turn to United Methodist churches during the week, they choose to participate in other congregations on Sunday!

There seems to be within United Methodism a DNA that prompts us to reach beyond ourselves and give to others. While some congregations have been criticized for being too self-absorbed, the overall outreach of United Methodist congregations is often ignored or dismissed. Denominational calls for financial support are quickly met with an amazing response. Annual conferences meeting recently have been reminded of the myriad ways they have been involved in helping to meet multiple needs, both locally and abroad.

It would be interesting to calculate the dollar equivalent donated by the thousands of volunteers who leave home and pay their own expenses to be involved in hands-on ministry in neighboring communities and states, or even outside the country. During the summer especially, thousands of young people use part of their vacation time to participate in mission projects.

I have good friends, a faithful United Methodist couple—a physician and spouse—who take members of their medical practice to an African country every summer, providing health care for two weeks in communities without medical facilities or resources. They take with them all kinds of medicines that would be easily accessible to us at a local pharmacy.

Others are a part of the group who work with women and children in a special program to help develop skills that can be put to use long after team members have returned to Georgia. This effort is not reported on any form to a conference or general agency; it is just done in the name of Christ.

Such projects are not out of the ordinary. Generous, concerned, caring United Methodists are reaching out all over the connection. Their stories are often not told in United Methodist periodicals—there are too many of them.

'These United Methodists are making a difference and meeting needs.'

They do it not for recognition or publicity. They simply see a need and try to meet it. Pastors and other clergy or lay leaders often lead these projects, spending countless hours coordinating fundraising efforts, making travel arrangements and tending to the never-ending details that make such trips possible.

Sometimes the tasks are simple from our perspective, yet they are left undone until United Methodists take them on. Often, however, the work is difficult and takes these volunteers to places where they do without the basic creature comforts to which we have become accustomed and take for granted. The hours can be long, and the climate is often challenging.

Yet these United Methodists are making a difference and meeting needs. They are changing lives, and they will never know the ultimate impact they are making.

Many are going where there are no other resources; if they do not do it, it won't be done!

And so, I want to take my hat off to these United Methodists who will be providing during this summer a healing and reconciling presence in the name of Christ and the United Methodist Church.

On behalf of your brother and sister United Methodists, THANKS!

**Retired Bishop White is the denomination's Endorsing Agent for Chaplain Ministries and bishop-in-residence at Candler School of Theology.**



# Red Bird Mission School hopes to reopen

BY HEATHER HAHN  
United Methodist News Service

Daugh Sizemore attended a one-room schoolhouse in the 1950s until the fifth grade, when a fire destroyed the building and his chance for a public education in the remote mountains of southeastern Kentucky.

The county school district neither rebuilt the old school nor bused the students to the next nearest school many miles away. For the rest of the academic year, they received no schooling.

Red Bird Mission School offered deliverance for Mr. Sizemore and his classmates. The school in Beverly not only provided free transportation; it also proved to be a gateway out of poverty and into a wider world.

"It was the means by which I became a Christian," said Mr. Sizemore, a 1964 graduate. "It was the teachers who taught me about the Bible and Jesus Christ, and through their actions, I wanted to live that kind of life."

Now after 89 years of educating and shaping the faith of youngsters in rural Appalachia, the United Methodist school is at risk of shutting its doors. In May, the Red Bird Mission Board voted to suspend classes during the 2010-2011 academic year. The other ministries at the mission—the clinic, work camps, craft store, community store and housing—will continue.

The kindergarten-through-12th-grade school, with operating expenses of about \$1.8 million last year, is the mission's most expensive ministry, and the board wants to build up its cash reserves after years of dwindling donations. Still, Taylor Collins, the mission's new executive director, hopes the school can reopen this fall.



UNITED METHODIST FILE PHOTO BY LOIS JUICKSCH

The school suffered a decline in donations that had provided for the educational and spiritual needs of students since 1921.

He has set a goal of raising \$1 million for the school by Aug. 1.

Mr. Collins, a 1966 graduate, has returned to the school where he met his wife and served as a principal and director of education for 13 years. He most recently was superintendent of the West Orange-Cove school district near the Texas Gulf Coast.

"I'm working hard and praying that we will be able to receive the benevolent gifts of people who are very interested in Red Bird," Mr. Collins said. "I'm particularly making a push for alumni donations."

Mr. Sizemore, a science teacher at the school and president of its alumni association, is not giving up either. "I had faith in May and I have faith today that there are people who are out there who will help us to keep it open," he said. "I also have a lot of prayer."

## Local poverty

In the most recent academic year, Red Bird Mission School had 220 students. The school draws students mainly from three counties where most adults work in the struggling coal mining and logging industries.

The education at the mission school includes extracurricular activities like band and athletics as well as a full academic slate. Christian instruction also is woven throughout the curriculum with daily Bible lessons and weekly chapel services. Families pay on a sliding scale of \$7 to \$56 a month depending on what they can afford.

Each year, about 10 to 20 high school students also board at the school because their homes are so far away. If the school closes, many of the students will face an almost two-hour bus ride each way to the nearest public school.

Many students grieve losing the Christian component of their education, said Rebecca Smallwood, a fourth-grade teacher. She and her husband, Mark, have taught at the school for 22 years.

"Davie, one of my students, said he wants to be in a school where he can pray and read the Bible, and he doesn't want to go anywhere where he can't do that," Ms. Smallwood said. "That was a turning point for me, when I realized if he wants it this badly, we have to do something."

In its fundraising efforts, the school is already off to a good start. At the recent meeting of the Kentucky Annual Conference, Bishop Lindsey Davis announced the conference had raised more than \$200,000 for the Red Bird Missionary Conference.

Those funds will be divided among ministries of the missionary conference, but Mr. Collins said nearly a quarter would go to the school. He said the school also has raised about



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY RONNY PERRY

Mark Smallwood, a music teacher at Red Bird Mission School in Beverly, Ky., plays guitar and sings a hymn with former students in 2006. The school, one of four mission institutions of the United Methodist Red Bird Missionary Conference, was closed in May due to lack of funds.

## How to help

Donations to the Red Bird Mission can be made through the Advance at [new.gbmg-umc.org/advance](http://new.gbmg-umc.org/advance). Red Bird Mission School is Advance #773728. Red Bird Mission is Advance #773726.

\$97,000 from alumni so far.

## Led to careers

Alumni often share stories of the difference the school has made in their lives.

Tim Crawford, Red Bird Mission's development manager, said two-thirds of the graduates go on to a post-secondary education. Many of the alumni have become physicians, lawyers, accountants and engineers, as well as United Methodist pastors.

"The school propelled me all the way through a bachelor's and master's at Western Kentucky [University] and a doctorate at Vanderbilt," Mr. Collins said. "Red Bird was critical to my success academically."

Herman Asher, another graduate and the school's principal, was the first in his family to earn a college degree. His father, who worked in logging and trucking, had only completed second grade.

The school continues to be critical to the well-being of people in the mountains.

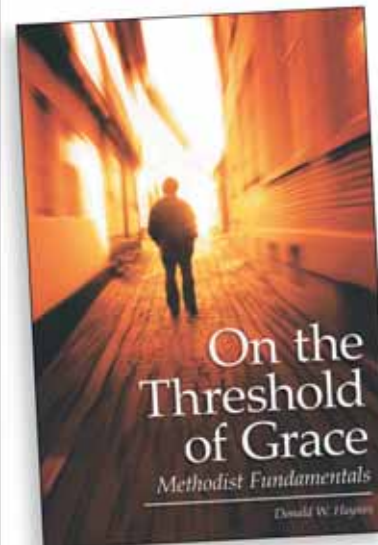
"I think the church should recognize this venerable institution deserves and needs to be sustained," Mr. Collins said. "With the generosity of the people in the church, it can happen."



UNITED METHODIST NEWS SERVICE FILE PHOTO BY RONNY PERRY

Students at Red Bird Mission School rehearse music.

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